LITHUANIA

"*The* AWAKENING *of a* NATION"

A STUDY OF THE PAST AND PRESENT
OF THE LITHUANIAN PEOPLE

ÅGE MEYER BENEDICTSEN

Translation from the Danish Language

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INTRODUCTION

THESE introductory words are addressed to those who with doubt, and not without a certain disdain, view the justifiableness of the peoples' craving for national independence, and it is the views held by these sceptics which have induced me to write this book, in its present form. I should be glad if I could remove those doubts, and show that national feeling is not a limited' childish notion, nor a narrow conception.

I have travelled far and wide, and I know from personal intercourse many of the peoples of both hemispheres. I have by choice dwelt amongst those who have no national independence and whose lands on the map bear the colour of one of the great ruling powers. I wished to hear and see for myself, whether their boundaries in reality were as effaced and smoothed out, whether discontent only existed in lyric fancies, or were only economic, social. I wished to hear and see whether national sentiment in reality means so little, something so outward and accidental that it can be cast off as a garment, whether national movements are only artificially maintained by a still independent mother country, or by restless minds, or those seeking their own advantage and in their vanity stirring up worthless and in many cases harmful feelings.

How poor the outcome would be of our travels, if their best result was not to enable to discern the idiosyncracies of other peoples, and learn to respect the way in which they maintain their right. It is only by my travels, that I have learnt duly to understand what national feeling is worth and what it really is.

National feeling is only a natural, instinctive feeling of strength, a feeling of strength similar to that of a child, who surrounded by its nearest is venturesome and ready for many things which it would not dare to do if alone or surrounded by strangers. It is the feeling of not being alone. Much can divide and sever the people of a country, different aims, different abilities, and different lots in life, but yet one feels, when times are normal, a common fellowship permeating everything, and that feeling one holds fast and will not relinquish, it would mean losing strength, losing one's footing. Let a single individual sever himself, try his fortune, let the tide carry him forward on foreign soil, yet however far he may advance, he will hardly attain so much as he would have done amongst his own people; there will be a want of peace in his mind, because he lacks the strength springing from national feeling. It is the union of the strength of individuals which in the great moments of a people endows national feeling with such wonderful strength, and a nation rises or declines as this feeling prevails.

The beautiful things which have been written about worldcitizenship, the common fight regardless of the insignificant barriers raised by race and language, these beautiful ideas are still but a vague hope, our feelings cannot master much beyond our own nation, we are bound to its soil, but it is a tie which bears and supports; should we let go we shall become like planks drifting in the sea, for each people may be likened to timber for a ship. With bands and bolts one can build a ship, which can sail the seas according to its size and capacity. Common soil and a common language are so strong a tie, that but few are capable of amalgamating with a foreign nation even if their lot in life compels them to do so. It takes time to free oneself from the old national responsibility, and still more to accept a new, and

before one feels responsibility jointly with the people amongst whom one lives, one does not belong to the nation in the proper sense.

True, history shows that there have been peoples, who have existed, have lived and could boast of civilization, and who have disappeared from the surface, swallowed up by the advancing armies of other nations. This has been possible because it was brought about either by unconquerable force, or because the physically vanquished became the victor in a spiritual sense. But this will hardly happen nowadays with any even a small people, as long as they know that they are a nation.

We see in the life of the whole world at the present time, that the most formidable foe of nationality, the "all-European" civilisation has called forth a struggle of independence, an individual development which sets its mark on the age.

Common European civilization and interchange of ideas have assuredly never been more pronounced than now. Each country, each individual nation prides itself on being a partner in the great universal development, everywhere they eagerly receive what lies within their power of the benefits of civilization, and all the wonders which the human mind and the human hand have wrought of late years, are carried to the furthermost parts of almost every country. Steamers and railways, telegraph and telephone connect cities and countries as if by a many-stranded rope. Large cities are stamped by the sameness of modern architecture, roads and bridges are constructed according to the same principles, international commerce conveys the products of all countries to all countries. It will soon be impossible to decide, whether the shop window one is admiring is located in London, Copenhagen, Budapest, Rome or Moscow.

The all powerful decrees which emanate from the creators of fashion and to which almost every country bows, turn us out in the same legitimate uniform, uncomplainingly we acquiesce from the Athens of the north to the Athens of the south, and the slight resistance which may be made in some corner or other is more amusing than effective.

The world's men of science meet more and more frequently for the mutual interchange of thought. The arts and industries of Europe hold universal fairs. Everything of any importance in literature is translated and explained amongst the nations. State institutions are copied, military and police matters, schools and parochial measures, everything in fact become more and more uniform. This is the one side of the life of the nations, as little national, as uniformly humane or inhumane as possible.

But there is another side to the question — some call it reaction, the fear of being swallowed up in the great sea of civilization; perhaps this bottoms in the feeling that one must altogether stand on home soil in order duly to cultivate and profit by the benefits of common civilization. One will not accept civilization as the great common goal, which is to gather us all in a uniform, settled life, no, civilization must only be the common capital, in the hoarding of which we are all engaged and of which we all enjoy the interest, each nation to live its own life inside the boundary set by its language, for it is in their language that nations have their stronghold.

What have not the last hundred years witnessed of awakening and growing peoples, slumbering which have awakened to activity, nations looked upon as crushed, which have revived and now brimming with life, nations which were forgotten, but with which the world now has to reckon.

I mention one example: the Bohemian nation.

Who, now, does not know the Czechs, but who knew them a hundred years ago? The country then was called German, everything beyond the lowly soil was German, German officials, German schools, German books, German money, German pleasure. Even the great Dobrovsky, who unwittingly became one of the pioneers of the suppressed people, apologetically described his studies of the Czechish language as the labours of an anatomist on a corpse; and at the present day it is this language which perhaps raises its voice the loudest, and boasts the fervid life within the Habsburg monarchy.

No people, not even the smallest, will now give up their language, their nationality, rather will they fight a wearing and protacted fight, endure and make sacrifices; has a nation but become conscious of itself, it need not despair in this fight. Even the small, aye, even dependent nations have realized, that their strength in the future, their best riches are vested in their national characteristics, of which their language is the banner. It is the treasure which the people have collected on the common soil, through common labour, common suffering, common happenings. Everything that can be won by being a world-citizen, or by being absorbed in a large nation, can also be attained without this, but that which is lost by sacrificing one's nationality cannot be regained, it results in a spiritual dislocation which requires at least one generation to heal, and when this healing has been effected, one has not advanced one step further than one would have done without this exchange of nationality; at its best it is therefore but a futile effort, but it can also result in a spiritual or even a material loss. All this, it must be observed, only applies to a voluntary or even intentional exchange of nationality.

To exchange one's nationality does not mean simply to "translate" one's knowledge, and one's labours into a foreign language, although to do this is by no means easy, no, it also means losing much that is irreparable, all the values that only counted in one's own nation. Many who have lived abroad for a lengthy period will have experienced that decline in intelligence, one incurs by being forced into a foreign language and foreign forms. This conveys some faint idea of what it must mean to exchange one's nationality.

But have not the United States of America shown how utterly devoid of meaning all this talk about the importance of nationality is?

Is it not in this case the aggregate, voluntary labour, men in unity and politically combined, without any petty regard to their original nationality, is it not these factors which have produced this wealth of prosperity and power? Do not all these millions amalgamate, easily and insolubly, has not their nationality been cast off for good and not for evil!

It is my opinion that those who look upon the United States in this way are not quite correct in their views. There is a fundamental nation in that country, there is an American nation, but this, too, is as uniform in its origin as possible. It is English, as is the nation east of the seas.

This nation no doubt has understood well or less well to absorb many foreign constituents, but as thousands upon thousands from all the corners of Europe made their way across the ocean, the absorption became more difficult. The nations nearest akin to the original settlers, Scandinavians, Germans, and Netherlanders, were the most easily influenced, but the new forms of doing life's battlers, the new conditions of life to which all had to submit, put a varnish of Americanism over these masses of people. The "nation" which now outside the original nationality peoples the United States of America is a crowd of millions which congregate in common "economic" interests, the "language" they speak is the same which can be spoken, though more faultily, by people who only know how to make themselves understood by signs. Food and drink, money and the means by which to earn money — everything in a coarse and brutal way is made subservient to these ends, that is to say, generally speaking.

For in America as elsewhere are to be found those feelings, that same longing for something more than the material bread, only less prominent, more indoors so to speak. Hitherto the minds of men outside the fight for the necessities of life were mostly engrossed by religious questions. In the east as in the west people were spiritually divided according to religions and religious sects, but this already for many years has not sufficed. There are now so many thousands from each nation, that they have begun more and more definitely to form nations, the old nations of Europe are reborn, and they begin to crave for more than the mere struggle for money; nor is money any longer so easily gained in America, that it offers adequate consolation for the loss of home and home country, and yet this new country more than any other offers freedom and acceptable conditions of life; one remains there but

will no longer entirely sever one's connection with the mother country. They wish for support and a spiritual home in the new country, nations are formed within the nation. It becomes a conglomeration of nations which every morning meet in common labour, and towards evening go, each to his own home and his own home life. It becomes a countless number of colonies which perhaps some day will become a support for the mother countries. There are signs enough that the trend of development in the United States moves in that direction, less that everything should amalgamate in an indefinrable whole. It is dificult to say whether the Republic is strong enough to sustain such an order of things, whether the people are wise enough to retain the greater issues without loosing their national characteristics, but why should it be impossible to keep green and cultivate the special spiritual interest — there are bands enough to bind the other issues.

Should the United States succeed in this, they will become a grand example of what Europe ought to have been.

That it is not so in the Europe of to-day we all know. We have "national feeling" enough, aye, more than enough, we see more often its caricature than its noble form, we see it as a gaudy masquerade with tinsel and false colours, we see it as an arrogant tyrant, big in his self-sufficientcy, and despicing the outside world, but worst of all where it does not exist at all, but pretends to exist. But it rarely attains to the expression, its right expression: so lofty a love of its own, that it understands and respects the love of others for theirs.

This little volume refers to one of the unhappy peoples of Europe, unhappy viewed as a people. It refers to the couple of millions, the exact number is not known, who belong to the Lithuanian nation.

This people, ancient in name and origin, has lived where it now lives as far back as history records, at the south eastern corner of the Baltic, on the plain between the Valdai heights and the sea, and on both shores of the Niemen. It was once a strong and free people, its princes in the 14th—15th century were the mightiest rulers of Eastern Europe. Now it is divided between two masters, Prussia and Russia, cowed and power-

less. For ages it was looked upon as a dying people, even the scientists of Europe who still study its language have thought it safe to prophecy its complete extinction. But suddenly, in the course of quite recent times, it has awakened or is about to awaken in spite of prophecies to the contrary, in spite of contemptuous suppression. This people of peasants, of whom barely one-seventh can read or write, are about to discover that they are a nation after all, that they possess a language and a country to love.

The awakening of this weakened people affords a striking testimony of what national feeling can do. To those who may ask of what use awakening of this people, I will answer: exactly the same use as of a dull, mechanical worker suddenly discovering the meaning of this work, and beginning to put his soul into it. The worker is awake when he intends to get more than bread out of his labour, and this is what the Lithuanians are now bent upon.

In order to assist the reader in the pronunciation of the Lithuanian, Russian and Polish words, I may add that I have adopted the accents or signs introduced by modern linguistic science and which have also been adopted by the new Lithuanianian literature:

š = English sh
č = English ch
c = English ts
z = French z
ž = French j

ą ę ų = signify a nasal sound after the vowel in Lithuanian and which has now as a rule been discarded.

ÅGE MEYER BENEDICTSEN

Preface

to the English edition.

More than twenty years have elapsed since this book was first published, in the Danish language. It was the outcome of my sojourn amongst a people which at the time was, so to speak, unknown and ignored by the world at large, of my interested study of their right to live as a nation. I called my book: "The Awakening of a Nation".

It is one of those silent victories which strengthen and encourage a man, when he sees one of his beliefs of his youth, a hope for the rights and welfare of others, approaching its consummation. The frigid smile, the shrugging of shoulders with which "the men of facts" and "those who knew Lithuania" at the time noticed my work and its prophetic tittle I can now meet with a contented smile justified by — facts, for Lithuania has awakened! The stupor during which Lithuania became overgrown by the thicket of history and was tramped under foot at the bidding of foreign rulers, has come to an end. It is as if the veil which for centuries had covered, almost smothered the Lithuanian people had been consumed by war and violence, by suffering and the bitter exile of hundred of thousands — and with her ancient rights and her youthful zeal this people are now witnessing the dawn which heralds in a new day.

It is no longer the heartfelt sigh, nor the silent striving of a weak and cowed people, it is an outburst of fresh forces, of will and open labour for the goal: "a free people in a free land"! It is a strange happening that fate has so willed it, that both the great fronts, whose hammerings Lithuania has had to endure, are assisting in raising the country after her long night of sorrow! — That Russia, the Russia of the Tsar, which formerly had placed her heavy hand on the people, has vanished as an evil dream, the gates towards the East are wide open, there are no longer any sentries, and the new Russia which is herself groping in the dark to find her future as a State, acknowledges, and must, for the sake of her own right to existence, acknowledge every nation's right to live her own life and build up her own culture.

Germany which with her armies has, in east, overcome all resistance and crushed the usurper of Lithuania and which now stands in Lithuanian Land with the "right of war and the soldier" serves her own ends in giving this borderland a little play for using in the meantime that independent will which was bound by her former master, and through this cheap mercyfulness opening a road for herself to influence and profit in the "by German arms liberated" land, instead of creating, by untimely attempts at hardfisted rule, an illwill which under altered political conditions might prove troublesome.

As for those nations who are fighting against Germany and her future dreams of the East, the whole of that mighty ring of Western peoples, England, France, Italy, the United States of America, they have their entire moral fighting basis in the lofty motto: The right for all the peoples of Europe to decide for themselves!

These powers have already acknowledged the independence of Lithuania before she even had the opportunity of asking for it!!

That which twenty years ago seemed like a fairy tale even in one's dreams: A Lithuania governed by Lithuanians, a Lithuanian State territory, seems now to be on the verge of realisation.

Behind a barrier of German bayonets, with a German military Governor at the head of affairs, a national Lithuanian Council — Taryba

— was formed in the month of October 1917, a sullen and tardy admission in response to a strong pressure on the part of the Lithuanian people — chosen men alone now rule the internal life of the country under a watchful German eye — and finally the German military rule, with stringent reservations and under the threat of a coercive treaty, was almost forced to acknowledge Lithuania as "an independent State" February 16th 1918.

It is evident that this would not have been brought about without the Lithuanians showing a will, strong enough to attain their exalted aim.

Anyone who is not blind must see, as does the writer of this book, that the Lithuanian people have a heavy and steep road to traverse before they gain a definite security for their free political life, but no one who has watched this people's fight during the last few decades, who has known how they stood a generation ago and how they stand today, can be in doubt as to their being a people who will obtain a voice in that grand many-toned assembly which after years of darkness will build up the new era.

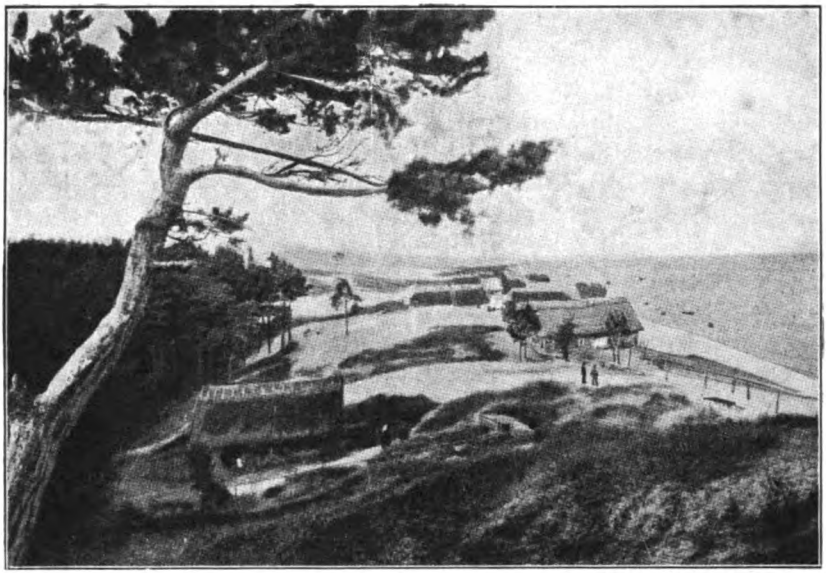
The work which Lithuanian intellectual culture has carried on within its own borders during the last twenty years, the time which has elapsed between the first appearance of this book in the year 1895 and the commencement of the war, is so manifold and pregnant with results, that in order to complete the book and carry it up to date it has been necessary to add a chapter in conclusion.

It has greatly pleased and touched me that leading men of the Lithuanian people from amongst several works which in the course of time have been written about Lithuania have chosen my book as the one which in English translation is to convey to the world outside Scandinavia some information about and evoke, it is to be hoped, some sympathy for this long forgotten people. I take this honour not so much as a sign of the merits of my book but rather as an appreciation of my heartfelt indignation over the wrongs Lithuania suffered, and of my fervent

sympathy with the fight its people fought against injustice, feelings which entirely filled my youthful mind when writing this book.

The summer of 1918.

ÅGE MEYER BENEDICTSEN
VIDEVANG — DENMARK



The coast of Lithuania.

PART I.

LITHUANIA.

THE COUNTRY — THE PEOPLE — THE LANGUAGE.

On the spot where the voracious eagles in the arms of the two mightiest military Powers of Europe salute each other, the boundary marks of both countries are planted in the soil of an alien people; the land is neither German nor Russian; neither the German nor the Russian language has right of citizenship there — this land is Lithuania. A little modest stream, the Šešupe, forms for many miles the boundary; it is so narrow that one can easily hold converse with the other side, it is so shallow that one can wade across to the neighbouring foreign shore, but it is a division firm and effective.

When I saw this stream for the first time one fair summer day I did not realize that Russia was so near — then I suddenly discovered something white on the other side of the glittering stream — a soldier erect and im=

moveable, bayonet on rifle, a little further on another and so on, as far as the vanishing horizon, soldiers as far as the eye could see — Russia's frontier guard against Prussia. For miles this endless chain of white-jacketed long-booted fellows were keeping careful watch and woe to him who should try to break this chain and strive to enter this guarded empire. The stream is neutral, one can wade in it to one's heart's content, perhaps even touch the opposite shore with the foot, but not further than this, or the white-jacketed fellows, with their bayonets and their long boots, would be after you. Prussia does not guard her frontier so strictly; a royal eagle on an iron plate and underneath »Königreich Preussen« — and hereby a flock of flaxenhaired children playing, and both here and on the opposite side in the carefully guarded empire, men, women and children in similar part working in the fields — the houses also are similar, for they are Lithuanians on eiher side. I watched the soldier on the other side and noticed his sun-burnt bearded face and small restless eyes. I wondered whether he really were such a stern guard? Hallo! what will you take to let me put foot on your side? I felt an irresistable desire to step across — "Come along, but be quick whilst I turn my back to you". — So I went to Russia for a moment, with a slight uneasiness lest my new friend should change his mind and send a bullet through my luckless body or at least arrest me, and then I paddled back again. All at once everything seemed so changed, so homely and friendly.

I had come to this idyllic frontier on a walking tour from afar. In the early morning my wife and I had wandered past fields scented with hay and yellow flowers, through forest of coniferœ with straight lined rows of trees and damp pathways, through villages where all the houses were of wood, with carved gables, the gardens full of ripe cherries. The sky was a pale northern blue and along the high road grew young mountain ask with their berries and pretty foliage.

Evening mist and the rays of the setting sun envelop the Lithuanian land-scape, the woods form undulating, bulging hedges around fertile acres of wheat and fields of flax. Low ridges where isolated firs form a fine network against the yellow sky of the sunset, rise gradually as we walk on, and behind us on the highest ridge in the midst of a dense green forest of oak, elm, and maple the slender spire of the village church rises high above all the trees. Thin blue smoke from the houses of the village chimneys ascends in the balmy air, there is such a friendly fertile beauty over the whole scene. It is no longer the Lithuania of the past, the realm of wild impenetrable forests which for centuries hid and kept this country for others and itself

— which gave to its people a strong fortress for its language, its faith, and its customs. The forests of Lithuania were like an uncanny supernatural power to the people of the middle ages; even the boldest adventurer pulled up awestruck at their outskirts, the Christian Apostle hardly ventured to enter this domain of primeval nature. One must first read about Lithuania as it was, read of this realm of forests, in order to understand how it is possible that this people have been forgotten and have forgotten themselves. In those days the country from the most distant inlet of the Niemen to the borders of the ocean, was like a virgin forest, and the river, like a broad shimmering highway, forced its way to the sea through densely wooded shores.

Daukantas, the historian of Lithuania, tells us of her forests in past ages. »The oaks lifted their wild crowns on stems so high that five men could not embrace them, branches entangled with branches, the foliage intertwined, forming giant roofs which shut out light and sun and rain and covering wide expanses — ivy, convolvulus, and honeysuckle twisted themselves so fast and strong from tree to tree that only an axe could clear the way, or the wayfarer would have to follow the path trodden by wild beasts. Every little opening was hedged in by luxuriously clinging tendrils of hops that clung to branches and fallen trunks, suspended in heavy garlands, swaying in the wind. Groves of birch grew down the sunny slopes, and the outer, tender, younger bushes stood right out into the water of the river, where the deers congregated to quench their thirst and nibbled the leaves of the overhanging branches. Even in winter the denseness and the warmth of the forest was so great, that fallen snow immediately melted. Slowly and anxiously the wanderer had to battle his way, no pathway, no sign showed the road from neighbour to neighbour, through this wilderness, only the barking of a dog or the crowing of a cock told of inhabited places. Across the isolated openings where an underwood of a mans height would spring up during a summer, the wayfarer was again closed in by the mighty forest, until he suddenly found himself on the brink of a ridge with a wide outlook over a surging sea of a foliage.«

In some places the land rose in twisted formations forming veritable mountain ridges, as at Rambinus in Prussia, the naked, sandy sides of which are crowned by coniferœ. From these hights one views the broad windings of the Niemen, and as a manycoloured beautiful map the skyblue water, the fertile meadows, the green woods and the brown houses of the villages.

The forest kingdom of Lithuania has been broken — fire and axe, plough and spade have transformed districts into habitable, cultivated land — yet

there are remnants of the primeval forests of the past, enough to give some idea of what Lithuania was like, when nature undisturbed was allowed to hold her sway.

Lithuania was the promised land of the hunter, everything that the boldest imagination of a northern sportsman could picture to himself lived, moved and voiced itself in these forests.

Herds of wild horses plunged across the grass covered plains, the elk, the doe, and the roe had their home here, and every European beast of prey, the bear and the wolf, the wild cat and the weasel, flocks of wild boar gathered together in the boggy marshes, and the bison, the grandest game of the forests drove in herds through the oak forests, tearing up the earth, with horns and hoofs, filling the air with their bellowing roar.

But a hundred years ago Lithuania was so overrun with bears and wolves, that the peasant children need only go a short distance into the forest to find wolf and bear cubs. Birds were to be found in such astounding numbers, that the Crusaders, when making their way through Lithuania were quite overcome by these deafening bird-cries and, the first fortification they built in Lithuania was called »Vogelsang«

There is still to be found a few hundred square miles far away in the Government of Grodno, where the primeval forest has been allowed to remain, it is called Bjelovieżskaja pušča, an immense forest of coniferœ, with a sprinkling of oak, birch, alder and mountain ask. It is watered by five rivers and countless streams, and here is still to be found a few hundred bison, but they are preserved and increase in number from year to year.

Towards the sea where the Niemen flows through a many-branched delta, between low-lying fields, the appearance of the country is entirely transformed. One has a feeling having been suddenly transported to the Netherlands — the same absence of boundary between land and water, the same rich, woodless plain, where the cattle must spread out their hoofs in order not to sink in, dykes along the treacherous miry meadows, a damp mist over the gnarled willows in the hedges.

This is the »Niederung« of the Germans. There is many well-to-do farms with large numbers of cattle, but the inhabitants for the most part are fishermen, living along the borders of the river in small huts built on piles. One has to be prepared for floods at least twice a year, but the people of the »Niederung« are not afraid of such trifles; there is no difficulty in obtaining the necessities of life here; the water is full of fish, and amongst the reeds plenty of wild duck, bittern and wild geese dive and quack. "A man who owns boat and gun, net and hook is well off, he is provided for".

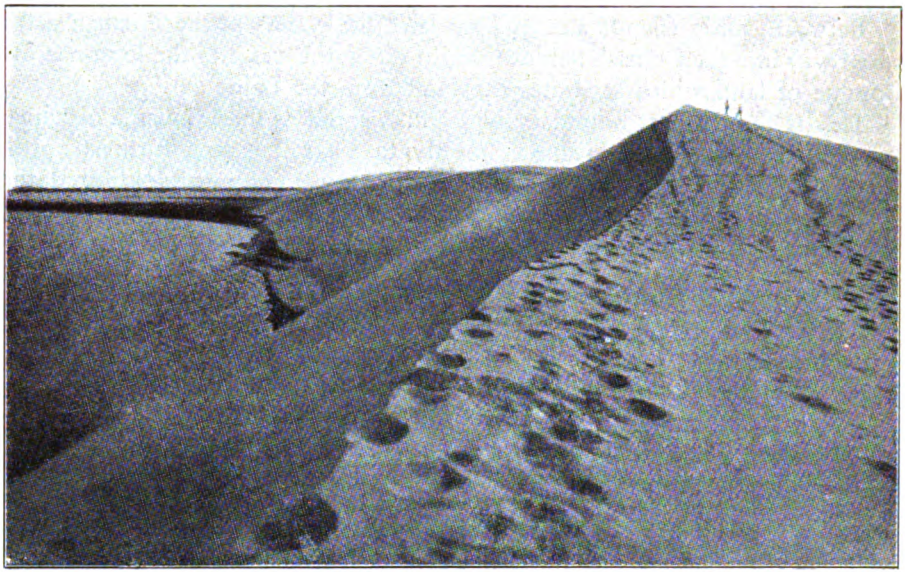
Between sandy islands and marsky land the waters of the Nieman make their way into the Courian Saltlake. Right out at the west lies the long narrow tongue of land which separates the Haff from the Baltic.

This is the furthest boundary of Lithuania, that is the Lithuania of which we are speaking, for the isthmus is only to a small extent, furthest north, inhabited by the Lithuanians; to the south their neighbouring kindred, the Letts, has resided from time immemorial, a wild ridge of chiffs, many fathoms high, with sand so fine that it is always drifting, protect the grass and corn-

A fishing-village in Prussian Lithuania.

fields of the isthmus against the ranges of the ocean. The scenery is truly grand and picturesque, the cliffs are broken here and there and a ridge of white sand with mighty firs works its way right down to the edge of the sea, where sand and water recede and advance. Deep funnel-shaped holes have been hollowed out, and the bather must look out lest he should suddenly and with no chance of rescue disappear through a layerof quicksand covering deep water; even horses have disappeared on dark nights without leaving any trace.

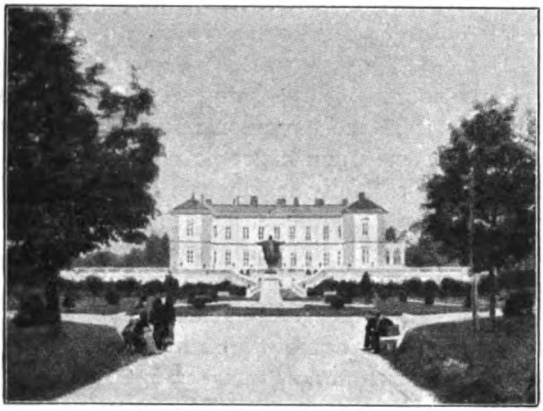
Should a storm arise, sand and water, everything, whirls in a blinding foam, there is no shelter to be found anywhere amongst the high dunes, where one's feet with every step sink deep into the loose powder and where the wind whips the sand in cutting gusts over wood and field east of the cliffs.



In the downs of Lithuania.

This is quite unlike the Lithuania with its majestic quiet and subtle charm, the Lithuania which lies along the shores of the Niemen, the Lithuania which begins amongst the reedy banks alive with countless birds, passing into the scrub-covered and wooded heights, where the villages lie amongst clusters of huge wild apple and pear trees, which shed their small sour fruits in profusion; the Lithuania, whose cornfields and pastures extend in every direction, with shady lanes where these Catholic people kneel before the carved crucifixes; the Lithuania where the setting sun gilds the mighty river, steeping the forest in its red shadows, and where the shepherds have lighted their nocturnel bonfires, the smoke ascending amongst the venerable oaks, whilst singing children gather the cattle together. This is the Lithuania I know — the Lithuania whose praises I would feign sing.

The Niemen, like a strong lifegiving vein, runs through the country, springing from distant quiet nooks and with its network of tributaries embraces almost the entire country where the Lithuanians live, uniting as it were the whole of this people it forces its way through wooded wastes and ridges, refreshing field and moorland, placing, in fact, its stamp upon the nature of the whole country: right from Vilna's boggy marshes where the waters of the river have expanded over many square miles of low lying



The Castle of Polanga.

country, whilst clusters of trees form elevated islands, end the fish at spring time are between roots and branches caught — and onwards to the sea the bending river proudly pursuing its course, carrying on its broad back rafts with small straw huts, in which the men take shelter on their trips lasting sometimes for weeks.

Lithuania has only a short expanse of coast facing the open Baltic, — hilly country with oak woods round the little town of Polangen. Near by it stood the far-famed Baublys oak; the sagas of centuries have clung to this tree like a garland of fairy tales; the oak was still standing in the year 1811, when the hollow trunk crashed to the ground; young Lithuanian men and maidens used to place flowers on the stump of the old oak believing in its wonderworking power, this stump measures 48 feet in circumference.

An old Lithuanian saga relates that all the cuckoos of the country gather every year at Baublys oak, and afterwards fly away, each to his own oak, and as far as their cuckoo can be heard is Lithuanian land.

In olden days when there was so little reliable foundation for scientific research, it was a difficult matter to be an ethnographer, even in a modest way, it was almost impossible to get at the central facts, one was apt to judge from some particularly striking detail. One first noticed the colour of the human skin, the outcome being the five classical human races, a classification so childish and

At the coast.

simple that it still lives in the mind of everybody and is taught in the lower phases of the structure of wisdom, although science no longer approves it.

In ages still more remote, when the source of all learning with Christians was the Bible, as with Mohammedans it is the Koran, mankind was also divided according to the Bible. If one came upon a people which did not at once fit into this system, the Bible was carefully searched in order to find out; where they should properly be placed, thus the learned community for some time agreed that the Finnish people must be the ten lost tribes of Judah, and the Tatars a tribe specified in the new Testament which tribe for the punishment of the world was let loose from the gates of Hell (Tartaros).

When the learned community became conscious of the Lithuanian people it was not so much their appearance and customs, as their strange language which give rise to the generally accepted idea, that the Lithuanians were a Latin race which had emigrated in olden times, and yet this was very far removed from the truth. The Lithuanians themselves have ancient legends that there was a time when they did not live in their present country; they have the same traditions of wanderings of which faint traces are found with most peoples of the earth. The old Lithuanian legends relate that they came to Niemen from the East — from the shores of another distant ocean, they were commanded by their gods to journey on and on, until they again reached the sea, it was thus they reached the Baltic. They do not know to what ocean this relates, perhaps the Indian ocean perhaps the Black sea; when the Russians in the time of the Empress Anna Ivanovna were fighting against the Turks and the Tartars, the Letts in the Russian army found, near the Black Sea, small tribes which spoke the Lithuanian tongue, and the few isolated Lithuanian villages which are still to be found outside the present boundary of the Lithuanian language may also be traced to the wanderings of this people towards the north.

The Lithuanians are still as they have always been a nation of peasants, they have not a single even medium-sized town in the whole of their country which they can call their own, they are debarred from all direct connection with the fruits of civilization, agriculture and cattle raising, forestry and hunting have been their means of livelihood and this has tended to stamp and preserve their race purer than most.

Even with only a superficial knowledge of the Lithuanian people, no one can have any doubt as to their being of European—north European—extraction.

When visiting for the first time a foreign country, where everything from the timber of the houses and the foliage of the trees to the people and their language, are entirely new, one would like to capture some main impression, some short and clear idea which sums up all ones feels; and if there is one thing more than another one would like to grasp and discern in a foreign country, it must be the characteristics peculiar to the people. The Lithuanians in many ways are a singularly peculiar people.

P. RIMSA — The plough.

Look at that young Lithuanian in his field, bending over the handles of his old-fashioned plough, he might very well be taken for a Danish or Swedish peasant; another may be seen walking on the church path with long boots, cap, and stick, he, too, resembles a Northerner, and that group of younglads, who are punting the sloop with goods from the steamer across the river, are of the same type.

A Lithuanian boy.

Tall, fair, with nondescript greyish-yellow hair, light coloured eyes, and a certain heavy good natured look over the whole person, the same monotony, the same goodnatured simplicity; also the same sound look of health, the same firmness; all these traits seem to belong to the peculiarities of a certain colour,

a colour of which the Lithuanian involuntarily reminds one, that of grey. A Lithuanian must be fair in order to be accounted handsome amongst his countrywomen, yellow hair and blue eyes, red cheeks and white neck and hands, thus a Lithuanian maid sings the praises of her chosen one.

Dark people are also to be found, and not so few either; however pure the Lithuania race seems be, it is all the same blended with a peculiar, strong, dark race, perhaps a remnant of the old inhabitants of these parts. When pure, the latter are distinct enough. I remember one day on a river trip up country, our steamer suddenly stopped. Two huge swaying rafts, over which the water washed with a will, were alongside of us, it blew hard against the current and the raftsmen had given up the job and wanted to go home by our boat. They were nearly all young fellows and amongst them were a couple of »dark« Lithuanians; one especially was a fine man, a regular Lithuanian bear from the primeval forest, not more than eighteen, big and stoutly made, with a long roughly tanned leather coat, a fur cap on head, the huge soaking wet feet swathed in linen rags and over them shoes of bast, and with belt tied round the waist. A face beaming with strength, dark brown locks reaching the shoulders and a pair of big, light, merry eyes under black brows, thick lips and a short chin — and the bearing half that of a man, half that of a bear, the head stooping a little between the shoulders, and short hands on arms like beams — one who strikes home when he strikes and stands firmly where he plants his foot.

It is much more difficult for me to fasten in my mind a true type of the Lithuanian woman from amongst the rich profusion of the different types I have seen. Is the little smiling goose-girl with her kerchief drawn far down over her timid greyish-blue eyes, and her light flaxen hair lying smoothly over her forehead, is she a genuine typical Lithuanian maiden, or is the tall dark girl with soft blue eyes, finely cut, straight nose and dark plait down her back, nearer the national type, or she, who every morning calls the ducks together under my window, rather coarsely built, her reddish light hair twisted in a wreath round her head, in gay coulored shirt, and such solid bare arms and legs?

One only comes across the Lithuanian woman at her work and in work — a day attire — unless one waits at the church door to see them on Sunday mornings or festivals, assembling in groups with light silk kerchief on head. They are all peasants, not of a refined breed, but all the same a pure race, and all the good looking Lithuanian girls have one thing in common, a peculiar simplicity and purety of feature. We Danes know from the children

of our middle class the most striking Lithuanian female type, what the germans call »klein und niedlich«, straight nose, serious lightcoulored eyes, smooth blonde hair and small mouth; but the parts of Lithuania most famous for female beauty, such as Rambinus in Prussia and Veliona in Samogitia, can show us even more than this, a simple classical beauty a finely shaped head, further enhanced by the broad lightly drawn ribbon band round it — village beauties worthy of any poets homage, a maiden who on a fair summer morning fills one's mind with delight, should one chance to meet her on her way to the stream for water.

A Lithuanian maiden.

Of course the Lithuanian maidens are not all good looking, not by any means, but there are enough of them to give colour to a gathering of maidens at work or in church, and the best ornament of the Lithuanian peasant women are not their neat little faces, but their modest womanliness This. has been said by several who have known the Lithuanian woman uninfluenced by foreign nations, it has been said as far back as the eighteenth century by Lithuania's only real poet Dunaleitis, it has been repeated by Gisevius, who knew and loved Lithuania, and it has been confirmed by many travellers, amongst them the present scribe. There is something about the young Lithuanian girl — a bashful modesty, a maidens blush in the midst of her womanly joy of life which it is delightful to behold. There is about her a kind of serene, holy peace of soul which does not permit of any wild or wanton intrusion, perhaps this is an outcome of their deep, often highstrung, religious feelings which frequently all too soon darkens the youthful soul of the women of this country.

Not many years ago the dress of the Lithuanians was as gay and varied as the dialects of their language, but, alas, international trade in the shape of cheapGerman many-coulored goods has almost entirely done for national dress, here as in many other places; now many a Lithuanian peasant girl has her best dress made from fashion plates from the last year but one, still the old

national dress survives in some places. In Memel all the Lithuanian church goers don their national dress every Sunday and right out in the delta of the Niemen, in the small swampy villages, the women still wear their many-coloured, woolen dresses, "margine" as it is called, from the word "margas", many couloured, and in the distant parts in the east, in the Vilna district and in Samogitia, could be seen before the Russian suppression and still in some places, beautiful and peculiar dresses amongst the women. The "margine", however, is common for the whole country whereever the national dress is

Returning home from the work.

still used. Originally some two or three hundred years ago, the "margine" was not a many-coulored check or striped skirt as now, it was a kind of shawl about three yards long and two thirds of a yard wide; it hung from the left shoulder to the foot leaving only the right arm uncovered and it was fastened with a belt round the hips. This shawl has no doubt entirely disappeared by this, in any case I have never seen it; it has been superseded by a skirt which formerly was quite short but now, at least in Prussian Lithuania, perhaps influenced by German »Sittlichkeit,« has attained a respectable lenghth. This is now called "margine", it is many-coulored and generally of wool.

On nearly every finger they wear rings of silver, tin, or brass, and round the head they tie a cloth of fine white linen, prettily embroidered; formerly the manner in which this headpiece was tied indicated whether the wearer was matron or maid.

In the winter the women wear short, elaborately embroidered coats, dark blue, with gold braiding and green or red stitching, lined with lambskin. In certain districts the women wear coulored belts with tassels outside coat and an embroidered linen shawl over the shoulders.

At the well.

Unfortunately now-adays one only rarely sees these gay many coloured dresses, but even though the women on the whole have abandoned the national dress, still in many places they keep to the old style of dressing the hair. The beautiful women in the Rambinas district must have learnt from the goddesses themselves how to plait their hair; but they are also supposed to do it better and in a more artistic manner than the other women of the country. A true Lithuanian coiffure is, it must be confessed, a very intricate affair. It is said of the women of Ragaina, that they plait their hair in from ten to eighteen strans in a plait, these plaits are laid firmly round the head in a ring forming a buckle of each side, and making a frame for the front hair

which is brushed smoothly back; this arrangement entails a good deal of time and trouble and the assistance of others, therefore the women only plaits their hair once a week; early Sunday morning the girls visit each other in order to help with the hairdressing, and through the week they manage to to keep it tidy by wearing a kerchief over the hair during working hours. About Tilsit the maidens plaid coloured ribbons in the hair, so that they stream down the back, but common to nearly all the unmarried women of Lithuania is the practice of wearing the hair in a wreath round the head until their marriage, then it has been covered by a kerchief or a close-fitting cap which the mother-in-law ties on the bride after the bridal night.

The men hardly anywhere wear the becoming old national dress, with belt round a stitched shirt, double vattoned blue coat and a tall hat; now the grey homemade wadmal coat predominates. The Lithuanians grows a moustache but otherwise shaves in the polish fashion; the hair is worn long and brushed flatly down.

It is a bright and pretty sight on a sunday morning at service in one of the small village churches in the Roman Catholic portion of Lithuania, the churches are nearly always filled to overflowing, men, women, and children stand or kneel from the steps of the altar down to and in the church porch. The sun streaming through the windows enhances the pictureresque scene with the gaudily painted church banners and the gold embroidered white raiments of the priests, and the gay crowd of woman in their red, yellow and green patterned dresses and light silk kerchiefs.

And yet everything now is colourless compared with the time when Jucewicz, a Lithuanian landed proprietor, travelled about the country describing what he saw in two interesting volumes; it was about the year 1840. At that time nearly every parish had its own dress, although with some similarity within each district; in those days he still met with young girls on the shores of the Baltic wearing the ancient Lithuanian shoulder shawl, but he found the most beautiful dress amongst the women in the very heart of Lithuania near Vilkmergé. I will translate his description in order to give some idea of a dress which I am assured is still to be found in some old-fashioned families. "The women", he says", on weekdays wear fine pale blue woollen shirts, but on Sundays and festivals they are of silk. They also use laced bodices of damask or golden brocade, sometimes of satin, with gold or silver lace and without sleeves, this bodice is laced in front with a silver cord. They generally wear boots, and only rarely shoes. The married women wear on the head a small tent-shaped hat, swathed with a long white cotton kerchief; the girls tie their coloured kerchiefs carelessly round the head, or wind a number of

ribbons round the hair, and place rue and other flowers in it. In winter the women wear crimson cloth županes which reach below the knee. A coat of this description", says the writer in a question, is very becoming to a young and slender girl. Over the whole dress is thrown a white shawl of home-woven linen — it is called triničiai and the shawl which is still to be found in the posession of some few Prussian Lithuanian women is a last remnant from olden days of the baptismal robe which the Lithuanians received in

A peasant home.

distant times when christened by their Prince, Jogaila. Also the name triničiai seems distinctly to point to the Sacrament of Baptism, the Holy Trinity.

An ornament common to all the women of Lithuania, are the many neck-laces of glass and metal beads, of amber and coral, just as with the Russian women.

As far as the children are concerned in the matter of dress, the main thing is to protect them against heat and cold, in the summer as little on as possible, in winter of course the reverse. In an all too big cotton frock, which the, mother or elder sister have done with, with a faded kerchief on the head

bare legs, but for choice a couple of rings, on the sunburnt fingers, this is how the Lithuanian mergaite sits humming or dozing as she watches her geese; the boy, vaikinas, can often be seen in nothing but his shirt, or in sack just sewn together. The Lithuanians are a handsome and well made race, but it is only in the children that this is fully evident. Work tells its own tale with the grown-ups. It is a pretty and amusing sight to watch a flock of these light-haired youngsters shouting to the swine as they drive them through the forest in search of mast.

A peasant farm.

The Lithuanian villages are all built of wood; the real oldfashioned houses are in two stories, with the upper story projecting on all sides, the low bottom story is used for storing wood, and utensils.

If one from a distance views a poor little Lithuanian village, it most of all resembles a luxurious grove, the brown timbered walls disappear amongst the fruit trees which crowd the gardens. It is only when one comes nearer, that one discovers there are human dwellings. Hay and corn are stacked under slender roofings, and in amongst the trees, often garlanded by hops and honeysuckle, lies the house of beams. The gable beams cross each other and on the four ends are carved all kinds of fantastic figures, for the most part, however, the head of the horse is the favourite, reminding one of old Northern buildings. The house is always divided into two compartments, even those of the very poorest, one compartment, the griničia, where all stores are kept, and where even goats and sheep, poultry and swine have their warm quarters in the winter, and the "seklyčia" the living room of the family. If one enters a poor Lithuanian home and walks into the seklyčia, where the family is gathered, one has a feeling one might be visiting one's forefathers a thousand years ago. In the corner you will find the family sitting round a huge roaring fire, behind a low brick-wall, the smoke from the wood hangs like a light scented mist over the whole room, from a hook in the ceiling is suspended the cauldron with potatoes, and from another hook the cradle, which is a piece of cloth round a wooden frame. One is bidden to sit down, and partake of the fare, potatoes and a glass of fresh milk, the cow is to be found immediately outside the door. During the summer the family do not sleep in the seklyčia, but in a special shed on poles, the "kletis", there

are no windows in it, all light has to come through the door or through a small square vent, the swallow hole it is called, and this is indispensible to every kletis, for the swallow must be able to get in when pursued by the hawk, but not the hawk.

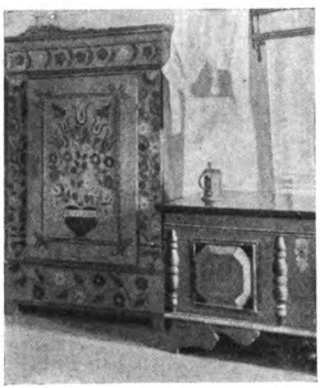
It is, however, far more interesting to visit a big Lithuanian farmstead, which consists of innumerable houses and sheds, a little village in itself, fenced in by long poles and sticks. Of gates there are none, one has to jump over or creep under the fences; between the different wooden houses are large plots of grass, each kind of live stock has its own particular shed, and then there are barns and corn-drying sheds, and at many farms also a bath shed, "pirtis", but although there may be an oven, it is only the hay and corn for the most part that have any benifit from its warmth. Then there are small sheds for different kinds of grain, and farm implements, and finally towards the garden we come upon the winter house, and the summer cabin, in the latter are generally kept the family's most precious possessions, substantial chests containing their linen and wool, their jewelry and books. On very large farms there are separate buildings, for the men and the maids, but otherwise they have to mangle as best they can.

A. VARNAS A flower-garden.

The garden is always divided into two parts, a smaller plot in front of the winter house, the flower garden, here grew only rue and "lelijéle" (lily), according to Lithuanian ideas all fine flowers are lilies, such as do not grow in field or forest. The rue is the favourite plant of the Lithuanians; this fresh,

succulent, green herb, which though half withered when placed in water regains all its freshness and spicy scent, is for the people a symbol for maidenlines, it is the bridal flower, and the praises of which are sung in their ballads over and over again; no Lithuanian garden is without it, and in most of them it is allowed to grow in profusion; on the other side of the house, generally round the "kletis", is the orchard, apple, pear and plum, in a green field given up to fowls and geese.

Round the winter house and in the roomy yard, lime birch and ash are generally to be found; here, too, are the countless workshops which a Lithuanian farmstead must contain — for the Lithuanians are, and still more were, Jacks of all-trades, the build their own houses, thatch them, make their own doors and are their own glaziers, they make carts and sledges only buying the wheels and the sledge runners, they make their own shoes, and do the cutting out of their own elaborate bells, they build their own boats and make their own rough ploughs. The women formerly were clever of all kinds of handiwork and sewing, and there are still but few Lithuanian women who do not possess a spinning wheel, and in many farms they have their own weaving room.



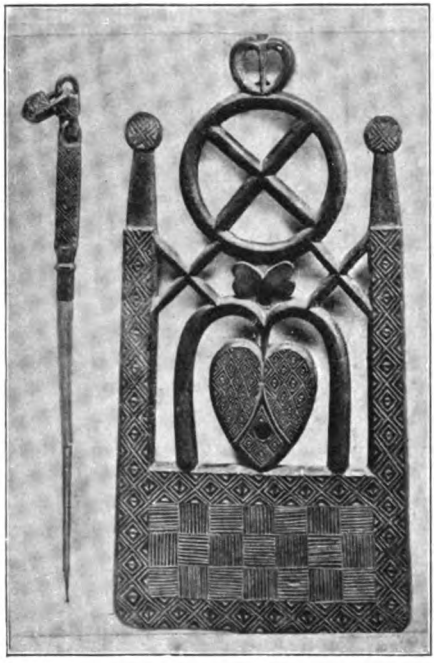
A peasant room.

There is also some liking for art and beauty in the Lithuanian villages, they love to have flowers in their windows, highly coloured pictures on their walls, broad, embroidered bed hangings, and if it can be managed carving on tables and benches; it is wood carving more especially in which the peasants excel. Without being taugth and without any assistance, many a Lithuanian can carve quite nicely figures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and many useful articles; most of the innumerable way-side crosses, and emblems of saints which adorn holy Samogitia are the works of local carvers, and often possessed of distinct artistic merit.

In these surroundings and in this round of occupation live the Lithuanian people. No great events take place, they have no wide horizon, their life is passed in a quiet, modest, work-a-day fashion, some fairly well-to-do, others struggling with sickness and poverty, many of them have a certain moody dislike for any change, which makes them adverse to reform of any kind, and contents them with their small way of living. This is why many Lithuanians still plough their land with the most primitive implements, this is why the

Lithuanian still allows his great herds to graze half wild on the pastures, and is thus obliged to keep numerous shepherds to guard them day and night; he does not know the advantages of rationel and co-operatic farming. Hitherto the aim both of rich and poor has been in a modest way to satisfy the many mouths on the farm, and at best put a little by for a rainy day.

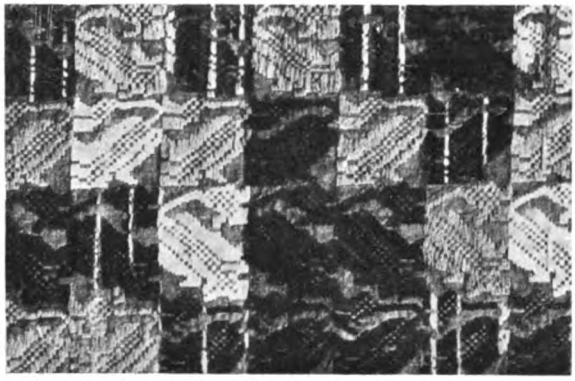
A towel-stand.



A spinning-wheel.

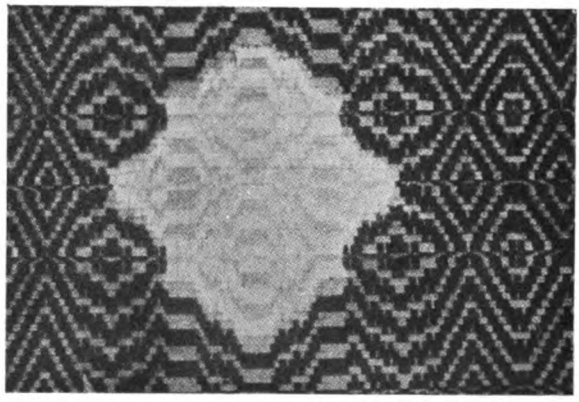
For the most part the soil is rich and fertile, wheat, barley, buckwheat, flax, and beetroot, potatoes, fruits and berries of all kinds grow lustily, tobacco and tomatoes thrive, pasturage is good and profuse; and from the forests they obtain timber and wood at little cost, great quantities of edible mushrooms shoot up between the firs, and wild apples and pears yield a fruitful harvest to the poor. They are good fodder for the cattle and in hard times they can serve for human food. The Lithuanian, however, seldom gets out of his land what he ought to, land equal to good Danish only costs a quarter of what would be the price in Denmark, and a farm which would be a valuable property in Denmark, in Lithuania barely feeds its owner.

The daily routine of life is only broken by family festivals, christenings, wedding and funerals. at the New Year and church festivals. With the great outside world, with the land where history is being enacted, there is but scanty connection, and has been still less; taxes to unknown rulers, and conscription were the only links with the outside world, unless indeed history forcibly made Lithuania the teatre of her dramas. The distant towns in the mind of a Lithuanian are Riga, Vilna, and Königsberg, beyond them everything is vague, and their ballads describe the more distant lands of Europe in fairy-tale fashion.



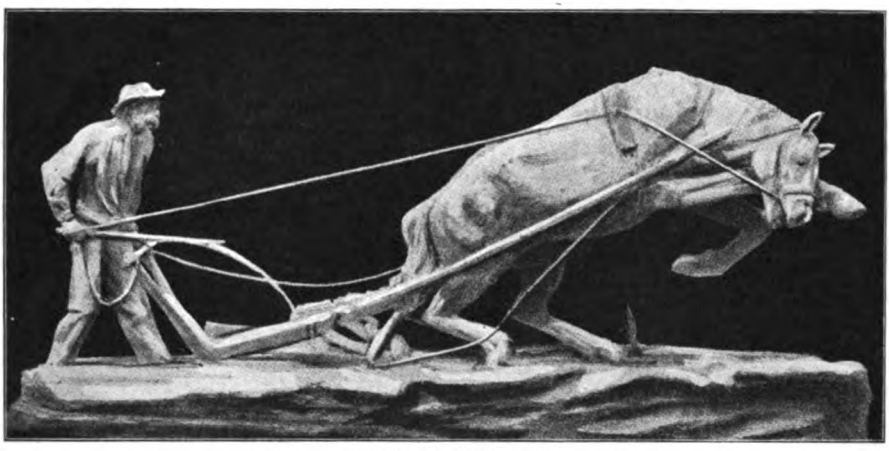
Embroidery.

All that was not flesh of their flesh, everything belonging to foreign countries was regarded by the Lithuanians with distrust and suspicion, especially if they came across people of another confession of faith. These people need a fervent and ever exacting form of Christianity. In Prussia, where the Lithuanians are Lutherans, they cannot quite reconcile themselves to this cold and sober form of religion. Within the domain of Russia they are all Roman Catholics, and that church has probably no warmer, no more simple adherents than this little people; the church, the great and mighty Papal church, was for centuries the only spiritual link between them and the outer world.



A table-cover.

However poor and narrow th life of the Lithuanian peasant within his own little circle may



The ploughman.

appear to an outsider, this people all the same posses a treasure singularly their own; more perhaps than any other European people, they have elevated their every day home life, have revealed a clear susceptibility and appreciation of beauty in little things, an imagination so pure and sound, that there is over these little thought-of people in their modest corner, something of the sunny rays of poetry. They may be likened to the sleeping beauty in the wood, which hides them from the world at large, and fosters in them pleasant, rose-coloured dreams.

It is as if the human mind, debarred from sharing the work and the life of the great progressive world, employes its gifts to embellish the narrow walls of its prison.

Its traditions have never been violently disturbed, they have been upheld as memories and symbols; something could be said of every

Summer.

day in the year, of every passing hour, of every action in the daily life, which shed over them the light of national genius, of folk-lore, of myth. Much of what we, too, have possessed, which we have had to barter away for the more valuable gifts of life, much of what we now only know from sagas and ballads, is still actual to the Lithuanians. Of the position of each animal in the natural system, of the significiance of every natural phenomena, things which we either do not understand at all, or of which we have learned the

Wedding.

true origin, the Lithuanians have their own ideas. True, much has already died out here, and something fades away for every day, but still the memories of pantheism are still so vivid, that earth and rivers, and air, that flowers and forests are permeated with reminiscences of the mystic past.

The West-european peasant has long ago ceased to feel any admiration for nature, in the old-time sense of the word, a simple admiration and joy of its beauty; he mostly regards the soil as a useful commodity. The Lithuanians on the contrary stil cherish a deep love of what is great and beautiful in nature. What Danish peasant lad at the sight of a hoar-decked forest on a bluish wintry day, would burst into song, in praise of its beauty, as a Lithuanian might do. What Danish peasant would quite naturally have said about

a poor fallen girl, as I once heard a Lithuanian say: "she will never again need a rue flower".

It will assuredly be difficult to find a peasantry in all the wide world which understand like the Lithuanians to make a festival both of work and rest. Yet the process of modernisation is also at work in Lithuania, in some places the natural simplicity has been destroyed or allowed to die out, but the memory of earlier days is still to vivid amongst them, tradition so strong, that they are held in honour, at least where the peasants have been left to themselves. In the happy contented regions one hears the peasants singing from sunrise to sunset; when the men and maidens early on a summer morning set out for the hay making or in the winter for tree-felling they are always singing, the maids sing to the men and the latter respond; in the fields they are merry and talkative, the work itself is as it were the gist of life; beyond that there is nothing to strive after, only to be healthy and happy, have enough to eat and drink, and use the days for the daily toil, the evenings for rest, wrestling, dansing and courtship, and the night for sleep. In some of the small villages which the present scribe has visited the villagers were not bent upon dancing or merry making when their work were done; they were "converted", they preferred to spend their time psalm-singing, and relating legends. The farm hands, men and women, generally assembled for an hour or two in the farmer's parlour, but everything appeared to me quiet and subdued — although I am aware I may be a little one-sided and not covering the whole truth, I feel tempted to sum up this people as follows:

"The Lithuanians have not yet succeeded in making nature subservient to them; they do not utilize nor exploit nature as a precious heritage, they do not rise above it as do the civilized peoples; they have been set free from that weird power with which nature holds the children of nature, they are no longer awed and trembling, but they have only attained to the same level as nature; they live and breathe like nature itself, for the moment alone, without any thought of what is to come, or what may be, therefore they are happy in their work, not simply longing for its consummation, only in order, then, to to feel the disappointment which often falls to the lot of civilized peoples."

It seems strange that a people who after all, according to modern notions live at no very great distance from the great world, have been able so long to keep themselves apart from the life which surrounds them, strange, that such a small, weak people have had the strenght to resist their big neighbours, and yet the explanation lies near to hand. The language of the Lithuanian has been the stronghold of his nation, this language which was known

and admired in the world of science before any other of the people's peculiarities. It is the language itself which most clearly shows, how original not to say primeval, is the Lithuanian world; these people once upon a time have made their way through these vast forests, and all they brought with them has, as it were, been crystallised; and the language itself, in much of its immense breadth and fulness, has been preserved to the present day. All linguists who become acquainted with Lithuanian must wonder that a living language in so many respects can be classified with the languages of antiquity. When Rasmus Rask, the eminient Danish philologist, who lived in the earlier part of the 19th century, heard Lithuanian for the first time, he thought it must be some dialect of the Sanscrit, which in some wonderful way had been stranded in this corner of Europe. Other philologists have found a striking likeness between Lithuanian and ancient Greek, and long rows of words which are the same in Lithuanian and Greek have been compiled. Often there are also similarities to be found with Latin, for instance compare the Latin sentence: "Viri, trahite jugum", with the Lithuanian "Vyrai, traukite jungą", but in spite of all this there can be no doubt whatever as to the Lithuanian language being most closely allied to the Sclavic language both as regards its vocabulary and its grammar; no philologist any longer doubts that Sclavs and Lithuanians in distant ages must have been one, but for some unknown reason again been divided, and whilst the Sclavic language have advanced at a greater pace along the legitimate road of linguistic evolution, the Lithuanian has only moved slowly onwards. The people divided in small groups with plenty of room between forest and bog, the connection between these young settlements must have been difficult, and thus arose a diversified multitude of Lithuanian dialects, each with its own peculiarities, all equally important and equally interesting to comparative philology. It is simply a treat for a philologist to hear Lithuanian spoken, something like what it must be for an artist to visit the art treasures of Rome. All the heavy, comprehensive, grammatical apparatus which the philologist knows from his Indian, Greek, or Gothic grammars, which always have appeared to him as something dead and distant, suddenly bursts upon him as a living reality. Seven cases, three numbers, both in declension and conjugation, the supine, and the gerund, and big unwieldy participial constructions. How delightful it must sound in the ears of a philologist to hear a child say: "Being requested to do so, seat you yourself!" — one adores that child straight off. — The language has an accent on words like a fluttering bird flying from the first to the last syllable, changing its place in the word with each inflexion and which is not content with one kind af emphasis, but has sometimes a rising sometimes a declining

tendency. All this in the high evidence gives to the language an old-time character. An enthusiastic traveler once wrote: "It is particularly bewitching when a young beautiful Lithuanian maiden in her national dress, with hair plaited in a wreath round the head and the antique white or red silk ribbon round the forehead, stoops and ties as a gift of honour an embroidered garter beneath the stranger's knee whilst saying the kindest words in her language or only "Ant susimatymo", — one could almost imagine one had been transported to ancient, classical days."

Gauged by an enlightened civilized world's demands as to what a language should be, that of Lithuania is poor in its stock of words, sometimes surprisingly devoid of the most commonplace expressions in our language; for all abstraction genuine national words are often missing, but to make up for it the language is rich in profusion, boasting a bewildering multitude of words for all things in real life, for all the actions and feelings which fill the simple human mind. There are at least ten different verbs for to come: depicting, how the willing, how the reluctant coming, how the clumsy, how the alert movement. A Lithuanian puts on his coat with: apsivilkti, boots with: auti, and gloves with mauti. Ripe, when of corn, is called: išnokes, of berries: išsipes, of nuts: išbrendes. The memory of patriarchal days, of which remnants still survive, has created a wealth of words for all the different relationships, which in Danish have lost their old names long ago and been ignominously superceded by a couple of borrowed German words: svoger and svigerinde (brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and a couple of French: onkel and tante. In Lithuanian the wife's father is called: ůšvis, the wife's mother: ůšve, the husband's father: šešonis, the husband's mother: anyta, the father's brother: dėdis, his wife: dedienė, the father's sister: teta, her husband: tetėns, and so on with fineness of distinction very difficult for a stranger to discern. It is also typical for the Lithuanian language, that it contains a vast number of phonetic words for all imaginable sounds and movements, a feature which the Lithuanian language has in common with the languages of most primitive peoples.

The Lithuanian people which politically are powerless, and divided between two rulers, without any ancient literature, without inner mental conception of any weight, split up in numerous widely different districts, each with its own dialect, under these adverse conditions for mental development, have not yet attained to the acknowledgement of one distinct dialect as a common written language for the people. To be sure the budding Lithuanian literature of the last few years is on the whole kept as near as possible to the good and pure dialect of Prussian Lithuania around Ragnit on the Niemen,

but it has also its great drawbacks, for not only is it very difficult for the Russian Lithuanians to understand, but it likewise lacks much of that rich originality which is to be found in the dialect of Samogitia. It will be one of the most important problems for the youthful, recently awakened but still very limited Lithuanian intelligence, to make a good and just selection in this matter.

M. K. ČIURLIONIS THE RED ALTAR

PART II.

THE MYTHS, THE LEGENDS, AND POPULAR IMAGINATION OF THE LITHUANIANS.

Obscure and inscrutable is the tissue of legends and wonderful stories which historians have preserved about the mythic world of ancient Lithuania. The learned critics of later days have had more than enough to do in rooting out wild and erratic representations.

Lithuania has been a gold mine for every imaginative ethnologist and religious philosopher. With a little audacity and invention they managed to find every possible primitive idea peculiar to the aboriginal mind in the Lithuanians; here were to found a striking relation to the mythic world and legends of all other Indo-European aborigines, old words and old customs were to be met with which pointed to something so primative, so fundamental, that there have been and still are less stringent scientists who think they see in the Lithuanians the last remnant of aboriginal man, who find in the Lithuanian language the parent tongue of the Indo-Europeans, and in the Lithuanian mythology the fundament of the mythology of all the other peoples of the same race. That these are unproven assertions and untenable fancies emanating from one-sided admiration for all that is primitive in things Lithuanian, is a certainty.

Still one feels as if the mythical fragrance of India and Persia hovers over the legends of Lithuania. The Lithuanian people in this show their primitive

relation to the Brahma and Zoroaster worshippers of Asia more clearly than other Eurpean people.

Prior to the conception of a definite circle of deities, there are also in the Lithuanians traces of a direct worship of nature, in which the sun was the exalted being. The sun, the giver of light and warmth, has in every time and with all peoples of the earth been worshipped with the most profound worship and adoration.

The sun.

Strange songs are still cherished by the Lithuanian and the Lettish people and some three score years ago, before steam had begun its work, they were to be found in much greater numbers, some altogether heathenish, some a simple and childish blending of heathen and christian notions; they seem to be the remnants of a more direct nature- and sun worship.

Yonder on the road I met the god-horse,
Over the saddle sunbeams,
Over the bit moonbeams,
And on bridle ends
Twinkled the morning star.

The suns progres across the heavens is depicted in ancient songs:

Morning: What glorious hall stands shining
Behind the mountain in a valley deep!
The lofty gates stand open wide
All glittering with silver.
Through the one God enters
Through the second Mary, the gentle,
But through the third the Sun
With team of golden horses.

Noontide: The Sun his horses bathes in ocean deep
Himself enthroned upon the mountain top
Holding the golden reins within his grasp.

Sunset: The sun his daughter gives to wed (the evening glow)
Beyond the ocean in the German land;
The sons of the gods bear forth the bridal gifts,
Each forest tree receives its share,
The fir receives a golden glove,
The pine a robe of dark green cloth,
All forest larks get golden rings
Upon their slender fingers white.

They have a hymn to the Sun which has no doubt been somewhat altered in the course of centuries, but which still possesses a fresh and wonderful flower — a hymn of veda in Lithuanian — and at the same time testifies to the tender feelings this people could cherish for their unknown fellow mortals.

Oh Sun, God's fair bright daughter,
Where didst so long thou tarry,
Where didst thine eye shed lustre,
Since when thou didst forsake us?

Far over sea and mountains
I guarded the forsaken,
Caressed the lonely shepherds
And showered golden treasures.

Oh Sun, God's fair bright daughter
Who has so late and early
For thee the warm fires lighted
And spread thy couch with care?

In east and west are golden stars
The morning star my fires lit,
The evening smoothed my couch;
My realm is far and wide.

The Lithuanian ideas have been further developed; the worship of nature itself and the revelation of its power was superceded, guiding forces being placed behind all that was visible and audible. Lightening, the most violent revelation in nature, became the symbol of the highest god, Perkunas, the all powerful ruler of the Lithuanian heaven. For him is lighted from the beginning of time "the everlasting fire" and it burned in his honour to the last day of heathendom. Many honorary names have been bestowed upon him, he alone was feared as all-powerful, invincible, he became the ruler and guardian of sun and moon. It was an ancient conception amongst the Lithuanians that the sun and the moon, children of the gods, were wedded, and the stars their children. But the moon and the stars roam at night, and the sun can never meet them, therefore he weeps morn and eve, hence the dew, and the tears of the sun are transformed into

Perkunas.

flowers, "saulės ašarėlės" (tears of the sun) each a picture of the sun; the daisy, the flower with the yellow centre and white petals, like rays. One of the oldest Lithuanian ballads, and there are but few of these left, relates the fate of the faithless moon:

It was in early spring time
The sun the moon did wed –
The sun arose so early,
The moon for good departed.

Alone the moon did wander
In morning star enamoured;
This roused Perkunas' anger,
He cleft the moon assunder.

"Why didst thou leave the sungod
And roam alone at night-time
In morning star enamoured?"
Then grieved the moon exceeding.

When after rain the clouds disperse and the sun causes the rainbow to come forth, then the goddess Laumé, the beautiful goddess of the clouds, appears; there is a legend concerning her which as related by an old Lithuanian forty years ago is as follows:

Laumé was sitting one fine day in her marvellous, beautiful, jewelstudded chair, when she saw a handsome youth on earth, and filled with sudden love she spread out her girdle, the rainbow, and descended to the earth. A son was the fruit of this love and she called him Mejlus (love). She came to him thrice every day to give him the breast. But the supreme god discovered her sinful act, her liaison with a mortal, and in anger he seized the babe and flung it over the mightiest clouds to the Seven Stars and cut off the mother's breasts, hacked them in pieces and strewed them around. The Lithuanians still call thunderbolts "Laumés papai" (the breasts of Laume), and the rainbow they call "Laumés jůsta" (Laumes girdle). It was and perhaps still is the custom to say when a rainbow appears: "Laumé is enticing the gods".

When the sky is clear and the sun shines, then the goddess of Light holds her sway, Karaliuné, a young and beautiful virgin, her head adorned by the sun she wears a robe studded with stars and the moon buckles her wrist. The rosy dawn is her smile and jewells her tears; when rain falls and the sun is shining, people say: "Karaliuné weeps!"

Another somewhat dim deity was Laime, the word still signifies happiness

in Lihuanian, but heathen thought must at one time have associated certain natural phenomena with this goddess. It is said that at the beginning of the year she foretold its happenings; did she appear in green apparel it was a sign of happiness and prosperity to the people, were she in red apparel war was sure to follow, were she in black it foretold hunger and pestilence. Perhaps these prophecies alluded to the weather of the solstice.

The people of Samogitia called the god of the seas Divsvits; for centuries far into the days of christianity even as late as the middle of last century the fishermen when setting out in the morning sang songs to his praise, or besought his help:

Divsvitise, little god
Oh protect our boats,
Divsvitise, Divsvitise.

Of the amber, which was found in great quantities along the shores of Lithuania, a legend has been handed down giving a striking picture of the waves as the luring and enticing power which binds the human mind: the Queen of the Sea, the consort of the Divsvit, Jurata by name, posssessed a magnificent palace deep under the blue waters of the Baltic; the walls were of the purest light amber, its thresholds were of gold and the roof was made of the scales of fishes, but the window panes were diamonds. One day Jurata dispatched all the pikes with messages to the nymphs af the Yura (a river in Samogitia) summoning them to a council.

They came and the Queen of the Sea thus adressed them: "Dear sisters and playmates, you are well aware that my father Praamzinas (the everlasting-Perkunas) the Lord of the Heavens, the sea, and the earth, has entrusted me with all power over these waters. Not she smallest worm, not the tiniest fish has had any cause for complaint, all have lived in peace, no one has dared to take another's life. But how an audacious fisherman, Kastitis, from the borders of my domain where the river Svienta yields its homage, has dared to disturb our universal peace and order, he imprisons my unfortunate subjects in his net and kills them — whilst I myself would not presume to catch a single fish, even of the flounders to which I am very partial I eat but the half and cast the other half into the sea again. (This is the Lithuanian explanation of the crooked shape of the flounder). This audacious one must be punished.

Boats await us, friends let us sail to the shores of the Svienta, he is at this moment throwing his net. We will lure him to the bottom af the sea with our singing and dancing and smother him in our embraces, and his beauti-

ful eyes which now bewitch all the maidens of Samogita we will blind with sand and seaweed — and in a hundred boats of white amber singing magic songs they set out to accomplish their cruel revenge.

Soon the approach the shore, and the echo sends back the song of the goddess from the near forest — and they discover the foe sitting on the shore mending his net. The fisherman is young and handsome with high white forehead, and deep black hair. With content in his heart and a song on his ips he pursues his labour. When he hears the low enticing tones he raises his eyes and discovers the hundred glittering boats, the hundred maids of entrancing beauty cnd amongst them, crown on head and with sceptre of amber, the Queen of the Sea. They begin to lure him nearer with their song. The fisherman listens, look at them in wonderment; he can hardly believe his eyes and knows not what to do. At last, bewitched by their treacherous charms, he rises and would throw himself into the arms of the goddess, but the Queen speaks and thus addresses him:

"Stay, thoughtless youth! thy sin is great and thou deservist the severest punishment but on one condition thou art forgiven. Thy youth and thy beauty have appeased my anger, if thou wilt swear to love me, thou shalt find happiness in my arms. But shouldst thou refuse the love of Queen Jurata, thy destruction is assured — choose!"

The youth knelt and swore he would love her for ever.

"Now thou art mine, every evening I will come sailing to thee and on this mountain which after thee shall be called Kastyté I will meet thee."

She then stretched out her sceptre, the oars splashed, and she vanished.

A whole year passed, during which the Queen of the Baltic every evening sailed to the shore to meet her beloved.

But Perkunas heard of this, and was exceeding wrath that a goddess should have loved a mortal. And one day when the Queen was returning from her beloved to her palace, Perkunas flung a flash of lightning from the clouds, which cleft the waves of the sea, struck the Queen's palace and killed her; the palace of amber was shattered into a thousand pieces. The fisherman was chained by "the Eternal" to a rock at the bottom of the sea, and the body of his beloved was cast before him. He was eternally compelled with eyes fixed upon her to bemoan his unhappy fate. Therefore when the storm agitates the sea, one can hear distant groans, the sighs of the doomed youth, and when the sea throws up peaces of amber on the shore, they are fragments from the ruins of the palace of the Queen of the Sea.

In the river dwell the nymphs, young maidens deserted by their lovers, and who in despair threw themselves into the sea or the river: they are

transformed into shadowy forms of luring women who threaten every swain with revenge; his doom was sealed when enticed by their song. It is the same story which is to be heard in every country of Europe, the myth of syrens, of rusalkas, of elves transplanted into Lithuanian soil. An old Lithuanian song, though hardly a ballad proper, relates with words which might have been sung in all other tongues the story of these treacherous maidens:

Art thou young and lithe and fair,
Tears thou never needst to shed
Live thy days content and merry
But do not go near the river.

When the sun its course has compassed
And the moon is slowly rising,
Shining through the misty whiteness,
Mirrored in the placid river.

Thou will see the waters sever
Forming walls of glassy clearness,
Thou will see beneath the waters
What by day thou ne'er beheld.

Maidens dancing — not like earthly,
Light and fair and wondrous luring —
But thy wages will be gruesome,
Shouldst thou strive these maids to win.

Thou will hear a song enchanting,
Nightingale could sing no sweeter,
In this choir of thousand voices
Thou forgettest all things earthly.

Flee, oh foolish youth in terror
From the wiles of maidens dancing,
If thou stayest but a moment,
Thou art caught by wave and maiden.

In songs and legends one comes upon the names of many other deities: Giltinė, the goddess of Death, a terrible woman who knows no mercy, needlessly destructive; she has but one opponent, Trimpas, the Restorer. If there is any truth in the legend of the to all appearance Indian Trinity — Perkunas, Giltinė, and Trimpas — it must refer, I suppose, to the change of the seasons. The serpent was the symbol of Trimpas, this might fit in with its winter-

death and re-awakening in springtime to a brisk activity and rapid gliding. Daukantas relates, that altars have been found in Lithuania with representations of these three deities, and with places of sacrifice for each of them, but this sounds rather improbable and can hardly be correct.

The earth has also its deity, Žemynėlė, the storm has his, Bangputys, (the wave blower) and there are many more.

Besides the chief deities, the heathen Lithuanian legends teem with spirits and fairies who dwell within and give a quaint life to every tree and house, every field and beck. There are spirits of the home, rapping spirits, and hooting spirits, but most distinct of all is the belief in the Laumes, the heathenish tradition which has survived the longest. Diligent research has not succeeded in finding out what the Laumes really are; nor is it known for certain that they had any connection with Laume, Queen of the clouds, in spite of the complete similarity of the names; but if one considers everything that fairy tale and legend report of these beings, one comes to the conclusion that the Laumes were a blending of numerous spirits of nature, for the Laumes according to popular belief are playing diverse parts, and they have a great many things to look after. The tales about them refer to functions which the Scandinavians have attributed to a variety of beings; they play the part both of troll, witch, elf, nixie, and the fairies of our fairy tales; they are always female, but neither markedly good nor evil; they can torment, but only do so when they are teased; they can be also helpful and kind to people in need but always in rather a mocking way; like the northern troll they are given to change children, as witches they fly in bands to wild and weird meetings and tear to pieces mortals who venture thither; as elves they are beautiful and alluring; as nixies they people the streams; as fairies they frequently help mortals in need, spin and work for them. It is as if Lithuanian thought in the Laumes had embodied the changeable weather or the unstable human mind. Always present, always distant, never quite at rest, never quite to be relied upon. They appear no one knows from whence, and they depart, no one knows whither. It might also be surmised that the Laumes are an ancient remnant of the worship of the souls of the departed, that the Laumes are the spirits of the dead, in incessant activity around the homes of the living, always playing a part in the life of mortals. I will relate one of the most famous legends about the Laumes which still lives amongst the people of Lithuania:

"This is the story of the wonderful changing of two babes which took place in a village in the parish of Budvetai, and which many old people still remember. A peasant woman gave birth to a child and the next day towards

evening her husband went into town to buy the clothes he needed for the christening, but the farm labourer slept in the house. At that time the Lithuanians had very big houses, as may still be seen at old farmsteads. Late at night when everybody was asleep, two Laumes suddenly appeared, how and through what they had got into the house the farmhand did not know; he only heard them talking together, for he was not really asleep but just dozing. The two Laumes went straight into the kitchen lit a chip, and went cautiously into the room, and without further ado they took the woman's new born babe and carried it away; they unswathed it and swathed it in their own swaddling clothes, putting a wisp of straw in the baby's. When all this was accomplished, the two Laumes could not agree as to who should carry the wisp of straw into the mother's room and put it in the bed in place of the babe; they stood for som time squabling over this: You carry it in! No, you do! as they could not agree they both seized the bundle and took it in. In the meantime the farmhand jumped out of bed and quickly seized his mistress's child which the two Laumes had left lying on the kitchen floor and carried it to his own bed. When the Laumes came back to the kitchen and could not find the child, they became very angry and began to call each other names — It is all your fault! — no, it is yours! — Didn't I say, you carry in the wisp, I meant to stay here and take care of the child, — I was sure they would come and steal it. — As they stood there scolding and squabling suddenly the cock crowed cock-a-doodle-doo! and one, two, three they vanished through the door. The farmhand took the child and carried it into the mother's room, there was a candle burning there, but the woman was so fast asleep, that he had great difficulty in awakening her; he had to take hold of her and shake her and yet it was long before she awoke. As she opened her eyes she said: May you keep your health for ever, what a mercy you awoke me, I had such an ugly dream, it seemed like a heavy weight on my breast. I could hardly breathe. — Then the farmhand told her all that had happened, but she would not believe a word, until she saw that she had two children, one seemed to be like her own, but the other looked very queer, that was the one made from the wisp of straw. — In the morning the farmhand went to the priest and told him the whole strange story, he wanted the priest to tell him what he should do. The priest gave him the following instructions: "If you are perfectly sure about it all, and can swear to it, go home, take the changeling, lay it over the threshold, and cut off its head with an axe, for the changeling must not be twenty-four hours old, as it only really begins to live after that time.

The farmhand, however, did not quite like to do this on own responsibility,

but waited until his master returned from the town. He again related all that had happened, and the two men without any further qualms took the changeling and killed it as the priest had directed; when they had cut off its head, they found the wisp of straw inside, but blood oozed from it as if from a vein".

This accounts for the Lithuanians of olden times looking upon queer and often big-headed children as Laume-changelings, and this is why it was always considered necessary to have a candle burning near the child until the christening, a custom which is still kept up in many Lithuanian homes.

If one looks for the fundamental basis in the popular belief of the Lithuanians, one at once comes upon a firm immoveable belief in predestination, and this belief was so strong, that even good and evil appeared to the Lithuanian heathen as submission to or defiance of fate.

Many proverbs, many old prayers and legends clearly show, that the Lithuanians of by gone days also believed in a future life. They were buried in full armour and with costly ornaments. It is interesting to read in annals of the middle ages: In all Lithuanians there is an extraordinary belief, that the soul on leaving the body is again transmitted to another newborn body..... the Lithuanians must have retained some faint memory of the belief in the transmission of souls, and in re-incarnation; the striving for the crown of life is not altogether finished at death; there are hard and severe fights to be won; even for the good it was difficult to reach heaven, one had to climb high and steep mountains — this is why the paws of bear and lynx were often burnt with the bodies of people of consequence, people of lower degree were provided for by allowing the nails to grow the last few weeks before death. The Lithuanians thought that the realms of the dead were in the land where the sun sets.

The young motherless girl sings:

Sun, oh stay a moment
I must whisper to thee:
Bring my own dear mother
A thousand evening kisses.

An old song says:

Not for ever dwells the Star,
Where at eventide it rises,
When the mid-night hour approaches
It has reached the home of souls.

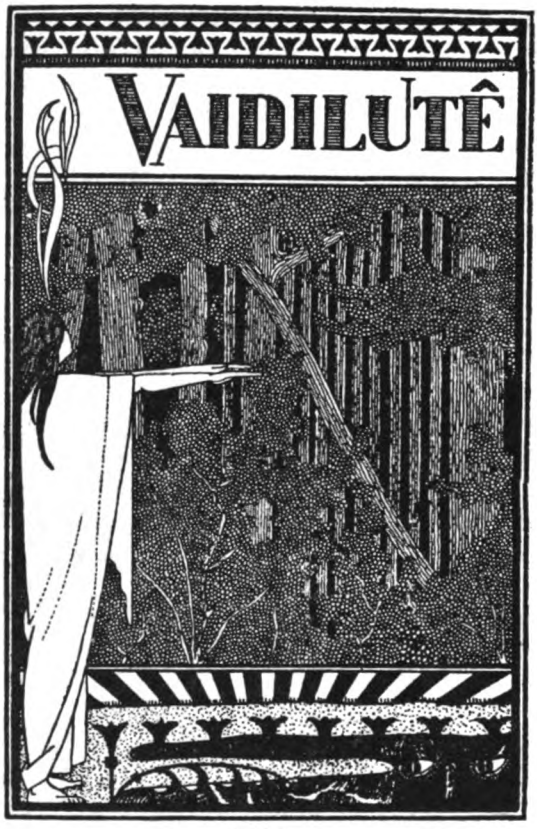
This powerful all-embracing belief in God, this almost heathenish religiousness of the Lithuanians, as an unfortunate consequence, developed a pronounced priestly dominion. There are those who in the priestly domination of old Lithuania see a direct heritage from their Indian kinsfolk, from the Brahmans, but yet there is a distinct difference in the character of Indian and Lithuanian hierarchy; the people to whom the Lithuanians are most closely related, the Sclavic, are so devoid of traditions of this kind, that it is no doubt right to look upon the Lithuanian priestly sway as a home development.

Priest.

Just as the Brahman regarded himself as a kind of demi-god, even superior to the lower castes of Gods, so was the Lithuanian priesthood raised high above the people; even the most powerful chieftain was often obliged to bend his rebellious mind before the authority of the heathen priest. It was a heathen faith so strong, that by itself alone, in times of discord it could gather together the whole of that world which spoke the Lithuanian tongue; the word of the heathen high priest rang out with authority, from the most distant Prussian land to the forestnooks of Lithuania; Lithuania itself in the misty past was probably split up and divided amongst numerous princes and chieftains, but one supreme power was acknowledged over the whole country.

This power vested in the person of Krivė-Krivaitis or Kurėjų-Kurėjas as he was called, because he was the high priest of the eternal fire (Kurti, to light). He was always an old man, a highly revered priest, who by his fellow priests had been selected for this high office, and as far back as the traditions of heathendom extend no one is known to have filled this office unworthily. His name amongst the people was bâlta gâlva (the white head). His dwelling was near the highest sanctuary of Perkunas, generally in the midst of a deep forest. Ordinary mortals were but rarely allowed to behold

his face, he only received advice and commands from the eternal god himself, with whom he conversed daily in his sanctuary, (rumai). In his service were priests who conveyed his commands, or as they were called the commands of Perkunas to the governors of the people; they were inscribed in a kind of runic letters that are unfortunately quite unknown now, all that is known is, that they were inscribed on the crooked staves which the priests carried round the country. Until late in the last century, perhaps even now, the people in Samogitia use a figure of speech which distinctly reminds one of the sending round of staves: "Aš ne klausysiu lazdos jo vyjresnybės" — I do not bend before the power of his staff, or "Karužasis lazdą parnešė" — Karužasis brought a staff, that is a command.



Priestess.

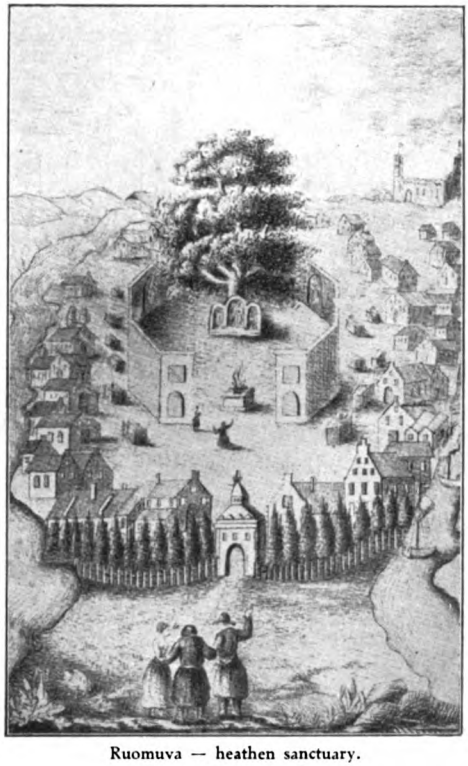
When great and important decisions for the people were pending Krivė-Krivaitis called a meeting near his sanctuary of as many people as would come, there was a large wooden hall near the sanctuary, the rumai, of the high priest. He stood there surrounded by 9 (or 12) priests (the latter figure no doubt being an attempt on the part of Christian missionaries to make the Lithuanian mythology fit in with the history of Christ, the twelve apostles); they were his personal servants, chosen from amongst the most prominent of the priests, something like the Cardinals surrounding the Pope.

The holy fire was guarded by young virgins, vaidelutés, pure and inno-

cent enough for this vocation. In different parts of the country there were sanctuaries where the eternal fire burned; even the Phenicians tell of a fire, kept up in honour of Perkunas, of logs of oak, in a small island near the mouth of the Niemen. It has no doubt been Rusne of which altar there are other traditions. At all the mightiest oaks which the priests came upon during their wanderings they made holy places; altars were erected — and sacrifices made — sacrifices early and late, summer and winter, great and small; the Lithuanian deities or rather the Lithuanian priests were insatiable in their demands upon the people for sacrifices. The lowest classes of priests or the peasants themselves undertook the meanest sacrifices, but if anything more important was to take place, or should it be the change of the seasons, or at the commencement of harvest it was necessary for a higher grade of priest to officiate. On the first day of the Feast of Spring in the month of Balandis (april) white robed maidens ascended the hills to bid the sun welcome. As soon as it rose they hurried down to the village with the cry, »the sun has come«; in the village the priest surrounded by a crowd of people stood sacrificing and praying to the eternal god Perkunas, to the music of shepherds' horns and kankles. The most solemn sacrifices had to be undertaken by Krive-Krivaitis. Once a year he sacrificed in the presence of the people a pure white horse, he himself in white raiment and with a three cornered hat, on the top of which shone a golden ball — should a stranger happen to come on the scene it was certain death; his blood must flow to appease the gods, and more than one ignorant or foolhardy person has lost his life in this way.

But the most splendid of all the Lithuanian feasts in honour of their gods was when Krive-Krivaitis offered himself as a sacrifice. In all the time, several hundred years, during which there are any records of the high priests of Lithuania, there are barely five who have not ended their days by a voluntary selfsacrifice as a burnt offering. The high priest took a solemn farewell of all those assembled, and under wild joy and thanksgiving to the gods and the victim, the flames consumed the noblest sacrifice, they were able to offer.

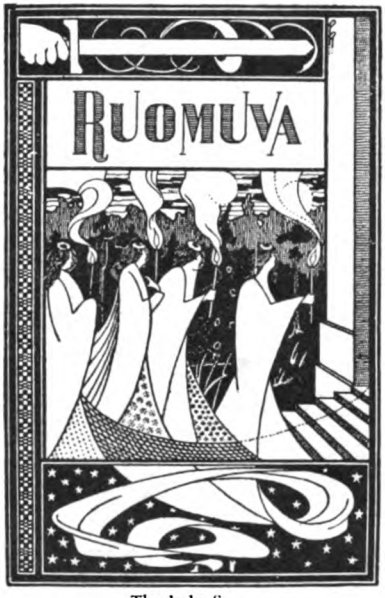
The power of the priests was not confined to religious worship; they were the chiefs of the people both at home and in warfare, they prophecied, they comforted, they encouraged, they helped the sick, and went in front in battle; the reputation of the Lithuanianpriesth ood was so great, that messengers came from foreign parts with rich gifts to the Krive-Krivaitis, praying for his advice. It was only when Lithuania was in sore distress from foreign foes that the highpriest resigned his power; the warriors then selected from their midst a karvedýs, (commander), who after the conclusion of the war



Ruomuva — heathen sanctuary.

gave up his power and returned to his probably modest position in life, exactly in the same way as a Roman Dictator did during the time of the Republic, but during the war he was: "Kožno ukininko gyvybos ir mirties viešpats" — The master of every householder's life and death.

The mystical penetrated deep into the Lithuanians' entire conception of nature; the popular belief accounted for the origin of everything that surrounded them. Every bird, every animal, many plants have their history of transformation, generally rather childishly simple, but sometimes pregnant with beauty, worthy rivals of Ovid's Methamorphosis. Every living being was to the Lithuanian a human being transformed by the gods, or, later on, punished by the Christian God for some sin, or rewarded with some trust in the great realm of nature. Of the bat it is said, that it is the soul of some departed evil person, that in this form must atone for his sins during three hundred years, in order to again inhabit some human being, purified and better, and therefore children's great grandchildren are always much better than the great great grandparents.



The holy fire.

There is a Lithuanian legend about the swallow: Once upon a time there was a Queen in a far-off land, who was given to excessive talking, and always to the harm of others, she was even given to spread false reports. Once when her brothers came back from the war, she ran to the courtyard to meet them, and after greeting them she informed them that their wives had died during their absence. The knights believed this and in their despair they killed themselves without going home. — The gods seeing all the harm this mischievous woman wrought with her tongue, transformed her into a swallow and imposed upon her the task, that for the future she should be the messenger of any one wanting to employ her, but she was never to add a single syllable to the message she had to convey.

Some old Lithuanian songs seem to refer to this popular belief:

Thy little swallow;
Longwinged swallow!
Fly to the home where my beloved dwells
Perch on her window,
Sing her your songs,
Tell of my love, of my longing and woe.
Say I am needy,
So poor and needy,
My heart of its dear little sweetheart bereft.
In evening breezes
When dew is falling
Fondly I look to'ards the home of my love
Looking and longing:
Is she not coming?
Daylight is fading so cold and so bleak,
Heavy my heart is,
Tears I must weep.
Why shall I never my treasure call mine?
God in the heavens,
Father of all,
Change thou the mind of our parents so hard!

The bison, the pride of the Lithuanian world, has played an important part in the imagination of the people; the popular belief has proclaimed this huge, hairy animal, with its sweeping horns, with its broad nostrils and heavy, bony legs, this colossus, whose roar could be heard far and wide, the guardian spirit of Lithuania; tauras it is called in Lithuanian. There is a legend about these oxen, that once when a vast horde of Tartars approached the borders of the forest they all made for the enemy, stricking the assailants with terror by their bellowing roars.

Since that time the Tartars have been speculating as to how they could root out these animals:

When meadow and forest are downing their green,
The Tartars they whisper as forward they ride:
Oh, fine is the fair Lithuanian land,
But strong are its warriors and vicious its bulls.
How shall we these warriors slaughter
And bring to destruction their bulls?
Their warriors are giants, their bullocks are fierce
And fighting against them would be to our harm.
We master the sea and the forests root out,
But the strong Lithuanian warriors and bulls
We fail to drive out from the land of their home.

Handsome drinking cups were made from the horns of the bison for the well-to-do Lithuanians, and the skin was dried and fashioned into narrow belts and bands for the throat. A strip of skin like this was a valuable talisman, protecting its owner against fire and sword, and especially effective if some weird letters, a kind of runes the origin of which is unknown, were engraved on the skin. This custom seems to indicate that the Lithuanians have known an art similar to that of the Northerners in their mysterious witch-runes; each letter had its emblematic significance or was the first letter in the word it signified. —

Of no animal are so many legendary stories told and so many songs written as of the cuckoo. Even the nightingale, though the faithful songster of Lithuania which in spring time fills the thickets on the shores of the Niemen with its song in eager rivalry with the shepherds, even of the nightingale there are not so many songs and legends. It is not the Lithuanians alone who have bestowed such great attention upon this greyish-brown homeless bird; amongst all the Sclavic peoples, also among the Finns and the Estlanders, the cuckoo is the most popular bird in folklore. The song of the cuckoo has not the jubilant summer gladness of the lark, not the fervent tenderness of the nightingale, not the sweet twitter of the swallow, nor the merry chirping of the hosts of small songsters. All these gladden and entertain, but they do not impress spontaneously, not as would the uncanny shriek of the owl or the cry of the raven, or more than any the song of the cuckoo. When this bird sits, sad and alone, on its branch and begins to sing its long, half warning, half calling: cu—ckoo, cu—ckoo, human thought has put such a variety of meaning into these cries, they have better than the song of any other bird harmonized with a susceptible, melancholy, human soul; the cuckoo's song is like the hourly chime of great solemn nature.

There is a Lithuanian legend about the origin of the cuckoo. In the time of Prince Kejstutis, when war and disturbances raged in the country, three galant young men went forth to fight. They had a young sister who loved them dearly, her greatest pleasure in life was to please them, to divine their wishes, and do everything for them she could. Her life was entirely given up to them. She knew of no better occupation than to sew and weave for her brothers and their horses; but an unkind fate did not for long allow her to enjoy this happiness. The trumpet of war called all Lithuanians to the fight and with tears the brothers took leave of their sister. In due course the war came to an end and the Lithuanian warriors returned home, but alas, where were her three galant brothers? The sister with tearful eyes looked for them in vain — they had fallen. Only the horses without their wonted burden

found their way back to the old courtyard. The maiden, overwhelmed with grief, left the father's farmstead, and taking the three horses with her went into the forest to die. She wandered about in the wilderness of the forest, spending her days weeping and sighing, until the "Highest God" at least took pity upon her and transformed her into a cuckoo, and from that time she sends forth every spring, the season when her brothers fell, her melancholy cuckoo, she is lamenting the death of her brothers.

The song of the cuckoo can signify so much, sometimes it foretells death, sometimes how many years you still have to live, or how long the young maiden shall remain unmarried. When a young maiden of Samogitia completes her fifteenth year, as soon as the cuckoo arrives she goes into the forest with her friends and then they all sing:

Oh sweetest little sister,
Cuckoo with feathers pretty,
Weaver of silken trappings,
Thy brothers' steeds' protector
Say when shall I be wed.

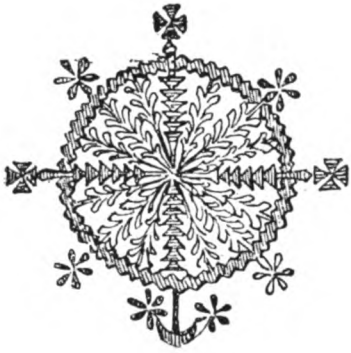
Most of all, however, the old immense forests of Lithuania have inspired the imagination of the people. In these forests to the dense depths of which no human being perhaps has ever penetrated, fantastic thoughts could hold their wild, untrammelled play. No wonders were too marvellous, no terrors too apalling for the popular imagination in connection with this great unexplored world.

A. ZMUIDZINAVIČIUS: The unhappy country.

A superstition prevailed far beyond the borders of Lithuania, that in the deepest depths of the forests, unknown to man, behind the dark firs, the wild oaks, and the tanglement of hop and honeysuckle, that there began the animal kingdom, there they still lived as in Paradise, on a beautiful sunny plain; but no man could make his way to the sunny plain, the forest itself mustered all its might and terror

against the foolhardy intruder who would venture there and his fate was certain death.

In later days the Lithuanians with pain and sorrow saw their forests, the wild ornament and pride of the country, fall mile after mile leaving bare and desolate fields in their place. At eventide when strange, mysterious sounds emanated from the forests still remaining, the Lithuanians said, that it was the goddess of the Forest, (Medomža), who in despair wandered about crying: "Lietuva yra miškunse. Kirskit miškus, iškirskit miškus, nebus Lietuvos — kirskit, kirskit!!" (Lithuania is where the forest is. Cut down the trees, cut down the forest, and Lithuania will be no more — aye, cut down,cut down!)



Church procession.

PART III.

THE CUSTOMS AND THE FESTIVALS OF THE PEOPLE.

When the last remnant of heathenism has vanished, when the last strains of old folklore have died away, and all legends and memories of ancient days are forgotten or only known through writings — numerous quaint old customs will still survive, customs which more and more impress one as empty forms, as outward show, but which often all the same are adhered to. Such customs are more particularly connected with the seasons of the year, or the principal events in the life of man, birth, marriage, death.

If such customs are to be met with amongst the most civilized nations of Europe, how much more may one expect to find them in Lithuania, where legend and folklore are still firmly rooted; and of a truth Lithuania still teems with the strangest old customs, many of them heathenish in their origin. The Lithuanians have from time immemorial had a love of feasting whenever there was an excuse for feasting, of breaking the monotony of work-a-day life with feasts, where everything was given up to merrymaking,

memories and faithful observance of old traditions. It is a well known fact that almost every Christian festival corresponds with some ancient heathenish feast, and Christian festivals in many respects have had to accomodate themselves to the hereditary disinclination on the part of the people to discard ancient customs.

How long the Lithuanians were in realizing that fire was not always a beneficial power to be revered, the symbol of God, which was to have full play wherever it appeared! Kraszewski, the famous Lithuanian Pole, relates how the Lithuanian people, in his youth about a hundred years ago, still paid homage to fire. When a home and a grain loft was on fire, no one dared to extinguish it; the people called the fire "a guest" and sometimes laid a table with a white cloth, green leaves, and bread and salt, in honour of the guest. If the fire did not come and consume the offering, an old woman was called in, who had to hop round the table naked, until it caught fire, which she would probably know how to bring about. Perhaps her appearance was a relic of the ancient sacrifice of a human being, the idea being to entice the fire of the Highest God by letting a naked woman approach the place of offering.

At no very distant time the Lithuanians at the festival they called „Ikures" celebrated the building of every new hearth.

Of all the old heathen festivals, however, which in later days became one with a Christian holy day, All Saints Day, November the second, is probably the most notable. The Lithuanians called it "Ilgin veses" (the feast of longing). On that day the people over the whole country assembled on the hills of the dead, for in Lithuania the dead bodies or their ashes were buried in hills, and in many places one still sees clusters of large and small burial mounds.

Before the festival, there were brewing and baking, cooking and roasting in every house, and all carried a profusion of food with them to the burial place. With a loud voice the priest and the elders of the people invited the spirits of the dead to come and partake of a meal with their dear ones. After they had all eaten plentifully, the remains of the feast were left over night on the hills, where only ghosts — and priests were allowed to be present. During the damp November night they sang hymns and danced

the death dance. When the people revisited the hills in the morning everything had vanished, ghosts and priests, food and drink; it goes without saying that those who fared the best at these festivals which lasted four weeks, were the priests.

The Lithuanians for centuries continued to celebrate this festival as their own particular feast, apart from the Christian priests, solemnizing the ancient feast of the dead and singing their "raudos", songs in honour of the departed.

All the ancient festivals of the seasons, the feast of spring, the feast of wreath binding, the feast of mid-summer, harvest festival and honey-gathering are all days of merry making, at which they have not departed from the customs of their forefathers.

The festival of the spring was celebrated on March 1st, the first day of the year in olden times. Formerly everywhere, and still in several places the people amused themselves on that day by drowning or burning a hideous doll of straw and rags, representing the winter which was about to die.

In heathen times the priests foretold what the harvest would be, by making sacrifices at all Perkunas' altars for fire offerings throughout Lithuania and causing a young maiden to stand on one leg during the whole of the sacred function; could she accomplish this the harvest would be prolific, if not it looked doubtful.

St. John's day which is now celebrated over the whole of the Christian world in memory of John the Baptist or the festival of Midsummer, was also a day of festival in heathen Lithuania and all the lands peopled by that race. Just as in Scandinavia bonfires were lighted, and herbs were gathered as a cure for diverse sickness, and to the deity of spring, the everlastingly praised Ligo of the Letts, homage was paid. It was a feast of purification, fire and water were employed, the people jumped through fires and bathed in the rivers and lakes.

A genuine Lithuanian summer festival was and still is the feast of July, "Vainikinas" — the binding of wreaths. On that day towards sunset the young people of the village go to the forest, gather flowers and bind wreaths with which they adorn themselves, afterwards all those thus adorned go in search of two young birches or two young lime trees and entwine them within each other; through this primitive triumphal arch they then proceed in couples, the young men by themselves and the maidens by themselves, and when they meet they kiss and sing:

Blagaslovik, Dievaite,	Bless us oh goddess,
Bernuži, mergaite,	Youthful swain and maiden,
Kuma, kumaite.	Steadfast friends the two.

The day of wreath-binding is also known in Russia as far as the Volga; the famous, perhaps most sung Russian ballad: "Berioza moja, beriozenka" "My birch tree, oh birch, thou little one", belongs to the songs of that day.

A. VARNAS: Harvest time.

That is the day when young people take a sweetheart, at least for that summer and autumn, if not for longer.

When the corn is harvested, and the flax is heated, then comes the most joyous day of the year — nubaigai — the harvest festival. All the big farms of the country throw open their gates for the whole throng of harvesters with all their children and especially on the large estates many quaint customs still prevail.

The smartest and prettiest maiden heads the procession, carrying on a plate a wreath made of ears of corn, covered with a piece of white linen. As they proceed they sing an old song as to how they have rescued the master's corn from a huge bison that would have devoured it (probably meant to signify the winter) but they have driven it away and brought the rye safely into the barn. When they enter the courtyard, all the maidens sing a song in honour of the master and all the members of his family, ask them to come out from the house and present the wreath. The master then receives the wreath, thanks everybody and gives every maiden a present, generally a kerchief or a necklace, but upon the one who presented the wreath he must bestow a more valuable gift. The spokesman of the farmhands delivers a speech according

Lithuanian girl from the eighties.

to the tradition, sometimes inscribed in mysterious figures on a strip of birch bark:

"From deep forest, from trackless swamps, pursued by famine we wandered about in search of a valley, strewn with flowers, silvered by rye, gilded by wheat. We wandered through dark woods and birch groves, over treacherous bogs, over innumerable bees' nests and over the lairs of the bear. We suffered from cold and rain and no one showed us any pity. At last an old bear had the kindness to tell os: keep on going, go where your feet carry you, go to where the finches fly and you will come to (here they insert the name of their master) who lives on a farm surrounded by tall maples, and

Harvesters.

who has immense acres sown with corn and only a few labourers in the house. Go to him, help him to harvest his corn and he will give you enough to eat and drink. We came to thee, pacious master, we have harvested thy corn and now we bring thee a wreath, not of gold or silver, but of rye like diamonds, of wheat like amber. Clarissime eminentissime Vestra dominatis, oratis, vocatio, sinter tere vere gruški garnuski lopatatum, kofatum, co to ya pank statum . . . ."

Thus as a rule runs the harvest address and it always ends in some confused, half Latin, half Polish sounds which are meant to be fine, sometimes the harvesters even rise to a little "French" as in southern Russia, where they wind up with: "Eva lou tre Ivan yur zeré tobuku som pan tre."

This as a matter of fact might be a slight satire over the family using a language unknown to the peasants, but which was almost invariably used

amongst the landed proprietors in Lithuania. The harvest festival ends with dancing and games, singing and drinking as everywhere else.

The mild, light-coloured beer which the Lithuanian peasant brews for his own use, alus they call it, does not particularly appeal to a stranger, but on solemn occasions they brew a very strong beer, well tasting and which will soon floor the drinker if he is not careful, although it is not so powerful as honey brandy, a liquor made from honey and arrack, meškines it is called; the Germans in Lithuania not unwittily call it „Bärenfang" which is about the same meaning as the Lithuanian word — From olden times Lithuania has been a regular country for bees; innumerable swarms of wild bees were to be found in the forest and it is on record that the Samogitians in the year 1467 exported 2000 poods of wax to foreign countries. At the present day there is hardly a Lithuanian farmer who does not keep bees; their bee hives if one may so call them are exceedingly simple, only old hollow trunks of trees lying in the grass, sometimes covered with a straw roofing; the entrance consists of a small square hole at the end. When they are emptied the bees are generally killed, in some places they divide the trunk in two compartments so that the bees can be driven into the one whilst the other is emptied of its honey.

Singing and dancing are the main joys of the Lithuanians, singing and dancing belonged to all heathenish festivals and were kept up in later Christian times. From the very earliest times a dance in honour of the sun and the spring has been danced in Lithuania and which the young peasants of today still practice in many places. It is called "Blezdingéle" — the dance of the swallow; I have seen this dance one summer evening in a little birch grove. Couple behind couple take up their position in two sets facing each other, then they swing round, bend down and pass through, quick as a flash so that it really in a way reminds one of a swallow's twisting and rapid flight. This old national dance has been popular in the ballrooms of Europe but few or none have any idea of its origin as a dance in honour of the advent of spring. This dance is accompanied by the following song:

Little brothers, sisters too,
Fly, oh fly away
Into groves so green
Fly, oh fly away.
Furr — furr, swallow wild
Furr — furr, swift of wing
No hunter seeks to kill thee
No one will do thee harm;
Furr — furr, swallow wild
Furr — furr, swift of wing.

Formerly the young people of Lithuania had a dance which is now scarcely ever to be seen — and so ancient in origin that it is probably a heathen war dance, a dance in which the young men had a chance of showing their fearlessness and alertness before the maidens. The name is kirvis (the axe). A ring was formed by the dancers, only one young maiden, axe in hand, remaining in the centre, then they all sang:

Let us dance, oh let us dance,
For the day is ours,
He who laughs and dances
To our play belongs.

Ruler of our fate, oh goddess
Unto thee we cry
Help us, mighty goddess.
When we need thy aid.

Let us drink, let us be joyful,
For the hour is ours,
For we know not on the morrow
How the winds may blow.

Boldly then, ye gallant lads,
Wildly swing your lass,
Lean upon her bosom
Steal her kisses sweet.

Sister maid so young and fair
Choose amongst our flock
One to be thy mate.

Fling up the axe!
Fling up the axe!

Ho! ho! fling up the axe!

Then the maid with all her rustic strenght flung up the axe into the air, all the youths strove to catch it in the air and he who succeeded had the privilege of dancing with and kissing the girl he chose, but many a time his blood was flowing during the dance, and there were often serious mishaps — not to be wondered at in this rough and dangerous dance.

A Lithuanian is born with a bridle in his hand, says an old saying, and

this people certainly know how to ride. Their carts are not good, always uncomfortable and clumsy, but the horses are strong and clever, well suited for riding. The young men ride whenever it is possible to ride, to the inn, to church and to every gathering, and riding was even more to the fore in by-gone days. The Lithuanian ballads teem with the praises of horse and saddle, of the quick gallop and the steady trot through forest and field. Not only the men but also the young women know how to ride, and in Lithuania it had been the custom, from olden times, for the women to ride astride like the man, but in ordinary female dress. A Lithuanian woman sits straight and firm in the saddle and manages her horse admirably. When the German Emperor very occasionally pays a visit to distant Lithuania it has been the custom

Lithuanian farmhouse.

in some villages that the young girls in national dress ride out to receive their exalted ruler who is himself always on horseback.

It is only natural that this isolated people have made the most of all the events which made a break in the yearly round of labour: births, weddings, and funerals, and in many places numerous customs still cling to these functions.

It is a matter of course that to all these family festivals were gathered a crowd of guests, as many as the house or the courtyard could hold, as many people from the village and the neighbourhood that were able to attend, and

it also goes without saying that providing for all these people meant a heavy outlay. Lithuanian hospitality was always to be attended upon, but on such occasions they had to resort to other means, in as much as the guests themselves were expected to bring some contribution to the feast; the men brought the drinks and the women at least a wheaten loaf. Still there is, as a rule, no great extravagance about the food and drink, they make more of their food and drink in their songs than in reality. Latterly however I must admit, they seem to drink more heavily. It really looks as if the people at all these noisy festivals satisfied a craving for being together in their leisure time, in conversation and in a common exchange of thought. These festivals are also the outcome of the whole neighbourhood's desire to celebrate the high days of friends and relatives, to show them they are now the centre of everything, to give them presents, to dance and sing for them. A real Lithuanian festival is still a pleasure which in a way is taken seriously. With it is connected a number of old customs which are observed, because they have to be observed, because they are as important as the harvesting of the corn in the field, and the milking of the cows. Christianity and foreign civilization have no doubt to a great extent, here as elsewhere, caused these customs to become mere symbolical forms for actual doings and people have forgotten why they do this and why they do that, but the grown up children are still playing with the same absorption as little children do.

Travellers in Lithuania, generally linguists, who visit the country for the purpose of studying its language and its customs, are always desirous of witnessing a big Lithuanian wedding, but only few have a chance of being present at one, for the harvest has first to be gathered in and all the important work in the fields finished before there is time to think of a wedding, and by that time foreign visitors have generally departed. There is every reason for wishing to se a big Lithuanian wedding, for one can hardly anywhere else find such a profusion of characteristic customs. Of course here, too, things are changing and in many places the function has been much simplified, especially in Prussian Lithuania, but in some parts weddings are still celebrated with all the old ceremonies.

The Lithuanian priest Juškevič who has done much for the language and the people of his country has amongst other writings left a description in Lithuanian of a wedding, "svotbiné réda", which he attended in his parish, Velûna, a delightful idyl only a few miles from the Prussian frontier on the heights near the Niemen.

He has described everything that took place during the whole of the week, a wedding lasts.

Of course one meets in Lithuania the same saddening state of affairs which is to be met with over the whole wide world: it is not love which with the Lithuanians plays the determining part in the matter of marriage, love is not consulted, but rather advantages and the wishes of the parents. We are so accustomed to seeing this, that it no longer surprises us, and yet one would have thought that in such a sound, fresh people as the Lithuanians it would have been natural that the young people would be allowed to choose for themselves as the heart prompted, but this is one of the things for the understanding of which a higher civilization is needed.

The Lithuanian wedding customs point plainly to what was once common to the wedding feast of all European races — the taking of the bride by force. In olden time it was the proper thing for the man to take his bride by the sword and violence, by cunning and craft; when her family had abandoned the pursuit and the bride after the bridal night had become his altogether, a compromise was made, heavy compensation insisted upon, and when this had been paid a reconciliation took place. By and by it dawned upon those concerned that this mode of abduction was only a waste of strength, and from being an act of violence, it now became a more practical arrangement — the bride was bought. The young man, bent upon matrimony had to pay a sum to the parents of the maiden according to her beauty, her station, and capacity; this by degrees evolved into a sheer deal between the parents, and the young people lost all say in the matter. They had to take the husband or the wife who was most advantageous from the parents point of view; this was often carried so far that the bride was unknown to the bridegroom until quite shortly before the wedding. The Sclavic languages bear witness to this for the bride is called the "unknown" (nieviesta), and the marriage festival for many a young girl became that festival of self-sacrifice of which the bridal attire common to Europeans bears testimony. All the dreams and tender hopes of youth were crushed, all that might have been, and only bare, cold reality in a misty vision was left to her. Many languages possess sad and hopeless songs which tell of the desolate heart of a young maiden, how everything was rosecoloured before that day, and grey and ashen afterwards, and of her loss of liberty, the symbol of which was the cutting off or covering of her flowing hair.

The young people bow humbly to the wishes af their parents, seek comfort in the great common shipwreck, by the means which are still left for the soothing of their hopes and desires, the old songs are sung, the old customs observed, and little by little the heart grows cold — . . . .

The young people of Lithuania as soon as they are grown up are very

busy choosing a partner for life. At their work, in the homes, in forest and meadow where they meet for pleasure or work, the marriageable young people are always on the look out, it is for the most part but a sweetheart for the summer or a friend for the winter, after a time — a year and a day — they part company with a handshake, with tears or angry words as the case may be; but should they find one whom they really wish to marry, then the parents come in, and if they make no serious objection, they instruct the son to look carefully into everything concerning his intended, whether she is healthy and clever, whether she has any money or expectations. Then the young man sends his friend preferably a smart and good looking fellow to the home of the intended, and if the maiden's parents also give their consent, then the long series of old customs begin which terminate in two people being allowed to live together as husband and wife.

When the summer is past and the young people have enjoyed the engagement time with decorous meetings always in the presence of witnesses, the old people and the priest of the parish fix a suitable day for the wedding. Should the couple be well-to-do, great preparations begin all over the neighbourhood, but more especially in the home of the bride. A young peasant girl, one of the bride's friends, has for some time past been engaged as the bride's attendant, she has to follow the bride everywhere, and take care that there are always fresh wreaths of rue ready for the bride. A few evenings before the wedding which is generally celebrated on a Thursday, the friends of the bride assemble in her home, and those of the bridegroom in his, and with jests and merriment the bearers of the invitations and their horses are adorned with flowers and ribbons and foliage. Both bride and bridegroom have their messenger, and he has to ride round the village and invite the guests in wellchosen words. This task is generally entrusted to a handsome and bright young peasant, for he must be a good talker and have a good appearance. At every farmstead and at every house on his road he has to deliver a fluent and bombastic invitation, and this has to be practised beforehand, as it is taken as an omen whether he acquits himself creditably. There is in Lithuania a number of these "kvieslys-addresses", ("kvieslys" is the name of the invitation bearer) they are all of a certain bombastic character, and preferably with that peculiar blending of clumsy exaggeration and playful pleasantry which the Lithuanians consider the highest degree of wit. A smart "kvieslys" jumps his horse over the gate, then the door of the house is opened for him, and with hat and staff he rides straight into the room, takes off his hat and addresses the household: "Good day, good day dear friends and near relatives, do not be surprised at my boldly riding straight into the house,

and not only into the very house but into the very room, I am a young "kvieslys" and my horse is little . . . ." and then he goes on: "I have come from yon happy place to this happy place. Listen now to this youngster speaking like the sound of a golden bell — he, the bridegroom himself, has chosen me for his messenger, falling on his knees, raising his marten cap in the air, and bowing his head low he asks me to invite to his farm, to his kin of clerical gentlemen, invite to the wonder working pictures of saints".

Then follows a flowery description of bridegroom and bride, and of the glorious people who have begotten them, of how their youth has been spent between flowers and play and how they then found one another — "the young maiden pleased him as the green rue of the garden, he had loving converse with her and exchanged golden rings". Then he tenders his advice as to how they shall come — the old ones must not be hungry and the young ones not too satisfied, the young men shall saddle their brown glossy steeds, and fasten their golden stirrups —" come ye young maidens, do not let the wreath of rue wither at home, the road is good, paved with stone and where there are not enough stones there are kernels of nuts and coins". He winds up by asking the women of the house for presents for himself and the "kvieslys" rarely asks in vain, embroidered garters, linen and belts are his reward.

The Monday before the wedding the young maidens of the village meet at the bride's home. This evening is called "mergvakaris" that is the maiden's evening, they decorate her head with rue, ribbons, and fine flowers and sing mournful songs:

Oh, good evening
Youthful little sister
Tell us why thou
Hast us now invited?

Shall we wander
In the rue-filled garden?
Shall we gather
Green leaves from the rue?

Shall we gather
Green leaves from the rue?
Shall we bind thee
Wreath from flowering rue?

Shall we bind thee
Wreath from flowering rue?
Shall for thee we
Deck thy glossy tresses?

Oh my dear dear ones
Whom I have invited,
Aye, I have two
Sisters dear and gentle,

They are wandering
In the rue-filled garden,
There they gather
Green leaves from the rue.

There they gather
Green leaves from the rue
And they bind me
Wreath of flowering rue.

There they bind me
Wreath of flowering rue
And they place it
Round my glossy tresses.

When this is accomplished, the wedding celebrations commence at the bride's home with dancing and music. The bride's parents lead off the dance, but the bride herself sits sorrowfully and does not join in the dance.

The same ceremony is observed in the bridegroom's home, where the wedding festivities also begin on the Monday with dancing and music, and late in the evening the bridegroom and his friends set out on horseback to fetch his bride. On the way they play and sing:

Say has the gay-winged
Cock sent forth his signal?
Is it time now, father dear,
To ride and claim my true love?

Yea, plucky youngster,
Flowering clover dearest,
Bid them in and welcome
All thy trusty comrades.

The bridegroom and his friends are on horseback but his best man, or rather his deputy wooer and the master of the wedding ceremonies drive.

At the bride's home everyone in the meantime is busy making preparations to frustrate the impending abduction of the bride. The young brothers of the bride, and their friends place boards and trunks of trees across the

road, tie the tops of young birches together to impede the bridegroom's progress and bind a net work of tarred ropes across the gate, or anything else they can think of. As soon as the bridegroom and his followers have reached the gate, they are not allowed to proceed any further.

The bridegroom and his attendants now try to force the door, but those in the house resist. At last however one young fellow manages to get in, preferably the same who took the invitations round. In the room all the maidens are sitting round the table, at the end of which is the seat of the marshal of honour, generally the bride's uncle. The bride herself is concealed in another room.

The bridegroom's messenger now delivers a festive and highflown speech to the marshal of honour, lauding the farm and the people, the bride and bridegroom, everybody in fact, himself included, asking in conclusion whether the bridegroom and his followers will be received. The speech as is the custom is interwoven with nonsense and exaggeration to the immense amusement of the company.

But the bridegroom is not allowed to enter on such easy terms. His spokesman must first pass a severe examination by the marshal of honour:

"Where do you come from? What do you desire, and what do you want?"

"We come from the city of Rome, from the Oléma land".

"What way have you come?"

"Along roads covered with the flowers of flax, lighted by stars, and strewn with green rue."

"Have you gathered those rue flowers?"

"Yes all but one we could not find, and we have come here to find it."

"Have you passports?"

"Yes we have passports high and low, so you will be all right in receiving us."

"Then tell me why the cock closes its eyes when it crows?"

"Because it knows its lesson by heart."

"Where is the centre of the earth?"

"Draw a circle and place yourself in the midst."

"What have you left at home?"

"The name of God."

"What have you brought with you?"

"The name of God."

"When our salt becomes full of worms, what are we to do?"

"Chop up some ice, dry it under the stove and strew it about."

"How many are there of us?"

"As many as there are hairs in a goat's beard."

The marshal of honour, much offended, shouts: "turn him out!"

"Let him turn me out, who has been twice born!"

If the messenger is as sharp-witted as this, he manages all right, if he is less ready tongued he is often turned out three or four times under much jubilation.

At last the door is opened for the bridegroom and his followers and they must first of all buy their seats from the maidens and pay with mead and bread. The maidens eat and drink and tease the young men, as Juškevič says with "wise and witty speech". Then the maidens make room for the bridegroom's friends who seat themselves, and the maidens sing a facetious song, in which they make fun of the bridegroom and his friends:

Pray be seated, take your places
All around the table;
We will look at, will examine
Your lips so red and full –
Mouthed like calves and horses too,
Sit our guests assembled.

Pray be seated, take your places
All around the table;
We will look at, will examine
Your teeth so pearly white –
Beaver-toothed, heifer-toothed,
Sit our guests assembled.

Look upon our guests, oh sister,
Se how black their eyes
Thank you kindly – owlet headed,
Eyes about the same;
Dirty, piggish, greyish lashes,
Sit our guests assembled.

The maidens then eat the bridegroom's wheaten cakes and drink his wine and reward him with another bantering song.

In the meantime the bride has been concealed behind a many-coloured rug in the best room; the maidens group themselves as a guard of honour in front of the rug, and sing a song addressed to bride and bridegroom:

"Oh good morning, dearest maiden!"
"Say what dost thou seek my bold one,
Dost thou seek my bold one?"

"Looking for my speedy trotter,
And my richly gilded saddle,
Richly gilded saddle".

"Say oh youth, so fair and gallant
Say, what colour hast thy trotter,
Colour hast thy trotter?"

"Chestnut brown's my glossy trotter,
Gold embellished is my saddle,
Gold embellished saddle."

"Know thy mare, thy handsome chestnut,
Stands in father's timbered stables,
Father's timbered stables.

And thy gold embellished saddle
Hangs within my father's chamber,
In my father's chamber."

They continue to sing of how his horse has trodden down the garden fence, and all the beautiful flowers, for in the garden grow

Flowering rue, as fresh as sunlight,
Lily, pale as silver moonbeams,
Pale as silver moonbeams.

How he has to make good all the harm he has wrought, several hundred silver coins, but he will not, unless he is allowed to carry away with him the rue, the lily, and the third flower, the maiden.

But the third flower has to be found, and the search begins, the whole of the bridegroom's followers headed by the music begin the search. The bride's companions attempt a last desperate resistance singing:

Riding swains advancing
Through the meadow –
Say dear friends, oh tell us
Your good pleasure.

Say dear friends, oh tell us
Your good pleasure;
Should it be our sister
Whom you covet?

We will never give you
Dearest sister;
Not without our mother's
Will and sanction.

One of the bridegroom's followers is then put through his facings by the maidens, and if he gives a good account of himself, he is allowed to creep under the hanging, and tries to find the right maid. If he is not successful at once he is turned out and must try again, but at last he brings out the bride.

Now begins the bride's leave taking of her parents.

The bride weeping must kiss her parent's feet. Her maidens sing a long ballad describing the bride's sorrow; saying about her tears:

Are they red and golden ducats,
Are they pearls like whitest silver,
On the cold earth falling?

Neither golden ducats are they,
Neither pearls like whitest silver,
On the cold earth falling?

But they are our sister's
Bitter tears and mournful
On the cold earth falling.

Then in the presence of all assembled the bride for the first time kisses the bridegroom.

The maidens comfort the sorrowful bride with a song to the effect, that even if she loses father and mother, God will watch over her, for the dew drops on the father's grave will shine like eyes in prayer to God, that He will not forget the fatherless.

Later on there is again feasting and dancing.

Next morning the wedding ceremony takes place. At an early hour the bridegroom sends the casket with his gifts, and his deputy wooer presents the wreath of rue with an elaborate speech: "Let all disquiet, all talk, all noise cease, wait at least for an Ave Maria". Then he enlarges upon the beauty of the place where the wreath of rue was gathered, he lauds the beauty and grace of the bride: "Behold on a day of spring a cherry tree with its buds, its leaves, and its flowers. In the same way as everybody delights in its beauty, so hast thou, young and beautiful maiden, caused joy when thou

didst invite relatives, and friends, and neighbours that they may laud you and bring their good wishes".

The young maidens are on watch to see if they can steal the wreath of rue from the speaker, but they rarely succeed. Then presents are exchanged, whilst the bride puts on the wreath; the young maidens give the deputy wooer prettily embroidered belts and garters and such like.

At last they set out for the church, the bride having asked and received a blessing from each of her dear ones.

After the ceremony the newly married couple and the company drive to the bridegroom's farm after a last farewell call at the bride's home, where the carriage, harnessed with the finest and strongest horses and decked with green branches and garlands of flowers, is laden with all the bride's goods and chattels, the bride and bridegroom take their seats and the bridal cortège follows on horseback, or in carriages, amidst laughter, and singing, and music.

As a farewell the maidens sing a sorrowful ditty about their poor little friend, and all the unhappiness that awaits her at the farm of her "anytéle" (mother in law):

Early I arose this morning,
Wandered sadly in our garden,
For the green rue I was looking,
Sweet green leaves of rue,
Green and fresh and fragrant.
I at last farewell would bid them.

On the carriage step I lingered,
Sat me down with saddened feelings;
Oh my God so tender
Comfort me, poor maiden!
Bidding farewell to my mother.

When I entered through the gateway
Of my husband's mother's farmstead
Woe and grief me threatened,
Lurking grey and dreary
High above the massive portals.

Then I prayed my brothers gentle,
Brothers faithful, clover blossoms,
Hasten hither quickly
Ere the hour is over,
Hither fly with weapon sharpened"!

And my brothers to me hastened
Came with keen and sharpened weapon
Cleft the gate asunder
Cut away its timber —
But my sorrow still remaineth.

Late in the evening the wedding matron, an elderly woman of the bride-groom's kin, accompanies the young couple to the "kletis", the gaily decorated little wooden house, whilst the guests dance and sing.

Early the next morning the wedding guests awaken the bridal pair, peep through the swallow hole, hammer on the door and sing:

"Awake, oh youthful maiden,
Late is the hour!
Awake my fair white lily
Late is the hour!

Away thou wild and shameless
Robber daring,
Her wreath of rue
Shall you divide!

Still she wears her green wreath's [1]
Tender leaflets,
Still her golden armlet's [1]
Rays are sparkling.

Alas! her wreath is broken,
As he willed it,
And the armlet stolen
From the fair one!

Awake my lad so youthful
Late is the hour!
Awake thou fresh green clover,
Late is the hour!

Away thou shameless maiden,
Evil wouldst thou;
Seest thou not his bright spurs
How they sparkle.

Seest thou not his bright spurs
How they sparkle,
And his cap of marten,[2]
Round and shapely?

Alas! his spurs have vanished
As she willed it,
And his cap unnoticed
Down has fallen!

The young couple have to get up and dress, but they do not leave the "kletis" for the putting on of the matron's cap has to take place there, the solemn act of the young woman's losing the symbol of her maidenhood, the wreath of rue, and the hair being concealed under the matron's cap. This ceremony is performed by the wedding matron.

The brother of the bride seizes the cap three times and throws it into the loft of the "kletis", and then it is placed upon the head of the bride; they all return to the feasting room, where the wedding matron has secured a seat for the bride, by giving the maidens a fine wheaten cake and a bottle of mead.

The maidens praise her prettily in a song:

The mother whom we love is like a rose
Her wheaten cakes are white like flakes of snow.

Whilst the young wife in all her finery looks on, the others make merry with dancing, drinking, and singing, until suddenly at a fixed sign the older guests depart, hurrying home to their farms, for all the young people now set out to make a series of calls, from farm to farm, from house to house. They have to be entertained everywhere, and wherever they go they have to steal something living, a dog, a cat, a fowl, or a duck, and whatever they steal is given to the bridal pair to begin housekeeping with, or those from whom the animals have been taken are allowed to buy them back again. The whole of this fowl-stealing, as it is called, passes off merrily, couple after couple goes forth, headed by music, and praying for the blessings of Heaven on their good hosts. These calls are continued throughout the day until late in the evening.

At last the wedding approaches its termination, but before the company disperses there is still one solemn ceremony to be gone through, viz, the conviction and execution of the deputy wooer, for it goes without saying

[1] Symbols of maiden innocence. [2] Symbols of manly innocence.

that this smoothed-tongued fellow has told some terrible lies. He has promised the bride all the glories of the world, instead of which she has found nothing but "woe and grief above her mother-in-law's portals", therefore the very severest punishment of the law must be brought to bear upon the luckless deputy wooer. He is sentenced to be scourged, beheaded, drowned, or burned. The maidens made a huge figure of straw and this unfortunate one, has now to suffer all these torments in due course.

The most venerable looking of the farmers is decked out as judge, he is padded with cushions and pronounces his terrible sentence to the real deputy wooer — particularizing how each part of his body is to be disposed of after his death; but strangely enough when the executioner would seize the culprit with a hay fork, it is the young maidens who protect him, and whilst he escapes by their aid, the execution of the straw figure they have made takes place with most solemnity.

This is the consummation. The young men bring a sledge into the feasting room, place the wedding matron on it and drag her out, and after her all the other guests are driven away. In the afternoon however a finely dressed young fellow on a flowerdecked horse arrives and invites the bride and bridegroom to the home of the bride's parents. Next Sunday the last of the marriage customs is observed; the parents of the bride visit the farm of her parents in law.

It requires some endurance, high spirits and a strong body to stand a wedding like this. From beginning to end it often occupies a whole week with music, and dancing and singing, with eating and drinking, the latter, alas, of late years has greatly predominated; it is an endless emptying of beaker and glass, with brandy, beer, stiprus, alus, meškine-degtine, and many a "winestruck" man has had to let the dewy grass be dry again, before he could recover from the one drinking bout to be ready for the next.

What people, even the wildest and coarsest, has not connected a number of customs with death and burial; from the red Indian who only looks upon death as a change of hunting ground for his departed comrade, to our civilized contemporaries — all celebrate death with different ceremonies.

In Lithuania it is the custom to convey the first intimation of the death to the bees of the deceased. The daughter or sister walks softly to the beehives, knocks gently on the roof of a hive and says three times that the owner of the bees is dead. Whilst the bier is still in the house relatives and kinsfolk gather round it, rows of candles are lighted burning day and night, the nearest relatives, parents, children, sisters and brothers singing the death

dirges for the departed. There are not many different dirges, it is always the same unanswered question: "Why hast thou departed from us?" These dirges are called "raudos", and as long as the body remains in the house, it is an old custom to sing to the departed.

In due time the body is driven or carried to the porch of the church, or the mortuary, and the night of watching takes place. From sunset to sunrise relatives and friends of the departed take it in turns to keep watch and sing hymns and "raudos". The porch is brilliantly lighted with wax candle,

A funeral.

offerings, and throughout the night silent or psalm singing peasants, young and old, move along the dark roads on the way to the church porch which is heavy with incense.

Alas little brother, alas little father!
Alas for all distress and sorrow!
Rich thou wast in wheaten loaf,
Say, why didst thou then depart?
Say, why didst thou leave me thus?
Even if thy road be hard
Willingly I'd go with thee;
But for ever thou art lost,
Ever lost to me.

A. VARNAS.

PART IV.

LITHUANIAN FOLK LORE.

Just as the German knights in bygone days wondered and rejoiced at the overwhelming and jubilant song of the birds in the forests of Lithuania, so may all friends of poetry wonder and rejoice at the profuse creative spirit of the Lithuanian people. The national poetry of the Lithuanians incessantly sings and sighs, laughs and cries. The gift of poetry, that heritage of which even the humblest of peoples have not been deprived, has in Lithuania found a soil singularly susceptible and rich; the national poetry of Lithuania is like a veil of wild rose and fragrant bird-cherry, that with a shimmer of idyl and fairy tale envelopes the fertile, spell-growing soil, concealing much roughness and many shortcomings.

Every country has its folk lore; the historical fate and the spiritual power of every nation are faithfully mirrored in its self-created poetry. There are peoples like the Indians and the Greeks, who have sung the praises of great times, of wars and heroes, of gods, of stirring life; there are those whose poetry is like a wreath of immortelles, every flower a memory of an event in the life of the nation, the powerless nation, itself debarred from great deeds,

records in verse and song, the wild, sanguinary, proud and striking history which is enacted before its eyes. Lithuania hardly possesses a trace of epic poetry, no historic deed, not a single man is mentioned by name, lauded or condemned. It possesses like other countries its festive lays, together with a multitude of everyday poetry, that poetry which springs from the craving of the poetic mind itself, without outer causes, a song, where children of another nation would only say alas, a song, where another would only laugh, a song for every pretty maiden, for every beautiful summer morning, for a field blue with flowering flax, for a sleek and glossy horse. There are songs for a dead brother, a lost sweetheart, the child's love for its parent is transposed into song; wonder and joy, sorrow and fear, all the emotions of the soul, lasting long enough for the tone to form itself into melody.

All this distinguishes the poetry of Lithuania even from that of its nearest sisters, the Sclavic peoples, it is a poetry of the moment and the mood — often simple and monotonous, as it is bound to be when emanating from simple little-experienced people, but never without truth, rarely without beauty.

Lithuanian poetry does not possess the power and imagination of Sclavic poetry, no pictorial wealth, nor width of outlook, but it owns all the delightful freshness of fields in springtime, the pure and tender colours, the faint fragrance of spring flowers.

It seems strange that neither historian nor linguist has undertaken the task of describing the habits and customs, the trend of thought, and the life altogether of this people from the rich collection of Lithuanian folk songs already gathered together, for it could all be united in one grand whole, a mighty epos — an epos of everyday life itself.

To give some idea of Lithuania's wealth of "dainos", the Lithuanian word for ballad (dainà — plural dainos) I may state that the Lithuanian priest Juškevičis, collected more than 2000 different "dainos" within some twenty square miles. An authority on the subject stated in the "Draugija" that the number of "dainos" discovered and copied in Lithuania probably amounted to upwards of 2.000.000, counting all the variations. Juškevičis could sit for many hours with elderly people, especially women versed in dainà lore, making notes and when evening came he was told that they were not half through. From a noted Lithuanian lady in Vieluna he collected 300 dainos. Every one, old people and children, know their dainos; it is quite a mistake to suppose that they have disappeared in some places where the Lithuanian language is not in universal use. Even in the most severely handled half-germanized districts, where the women have forgotten the Lithuanian dress

and coiffure, where the children speak low German amongst themselves rather than Lithuanian, even there one may hear Lithuanian songs; for when the village girls sing they find the mother tongue is best after all, and when one crosses the Russian frontier there are places where the maidens sing from morning to night, whenever there is leisure and opportunity. They delight in singing at their work, and are always ready to please a stranger with a song. They will gather together a little band of maidens and they will go on singing as long as he cares to listen, their repertoire is extensive, and no one thinks of making any difficulties. They all sing with a will and make the low room ring with the verses they have learnt from parents or sisters or perhaps themselves composed in some happy moment. But rather than hear a number of singers indoors, where the singing sometimes may be a little shrill, anyone desirous of hearing a dainà for its own sake, should at sunset go and listen to the singing of the shepherds and shepherdesses when they gather the herds together and their song is imbued with the peace of eventide. —

Just as there are a multitude of songs, so are there a multitude of melodies. It has often been said that Lithuanian melodies are always in the minor, but this is not so, the most tender, and playful melodies in the major, the sweetest merriest tunes are to be found in the peasant music of Lithuania; they are a treasure to a lover of music, just as the words are to a lover of poetry. Here too, a certain Lithuanian heaviness and monotony may perhaps predominate, but is not all dominant. Even the present scribe, with his limited knowledge of music, has derived much pleasure from listening to Lithuanian songs also before he knew the meaning of the words.

One must handle the national poetry of Lithuania tenderly and lovingly in order to appreciate it as it deserves. To fail in this on account of its monotony as many have done, shows the same lack of understanding as it would be if one tired and wearied of birds singing in the forest because it is monotonous. One must certainly lay aside the high and exacting demands which one applies to what one might call artistic poetry, if the latter is to be considered great and beautiful; one must remember that national peasant poetry is not the subtle expression of an individual, a highly gifted soul, but the simple impression of the many, shaped in poetic garb, it is the music of the soul to the labour of the body. All that is to be found of beautiful and elevating thought in folk song is in a certain moral sense infinitely more valuable than the beauties of artistic poetry, for it is the heritage of the thousands.

In order fully to appreciate the Lithuanian peasant songs one should by

right know and understand the rich realm of legends and fancies which are veiled in simple words. It is every day life and humble human beings who are most often portrayed in them, but they are portrayed in festive garb and festive mood.

Most people of the present day never hear the songs of the people as the people themselves sing them, and still less as it spontaneously springs into life on the spur of the moment; very few therefore have a correct idea as to how this really happens. One imagines perhaps some old man or youth standing up in the midst of a gathering and giving forth with enthusiasm his last exalted thought to his own melody.

Simple words.

It is a much simpler process. Many would probably be disappointed and entirely unable to find any trace of improvisation or the flash of genius.

As a matter of fact, generally speaking, there is no inspired conception. They are old, old songs, only slightly altered in the course of time, other words where old words have been forgotten, made more up to date when the rustic singer came upon a word or an expression which he or she no longer understood.

All these little shepherdesses and youthful bargees are not poets, they only troll their lays to the best of their memory. Should one listen to them and make a note of the words, it is quite possible, even if one were ever so clever in Lithuanian, that one would be unable to understand the meaning — there is so much of this trolling and melancholy singing that is more like the chirping of birds than human speech. Still the Lithuanians prefer to let their thoughts accompany their words; although be it far from me to say that the good Lithuanians sing dramatically. They are quite capable of singing a wild and merry song with the deepest seriousness, and I have heard a sorrowful ballad, on the tragic shortness of life, sung in the cheeriest fashion.

I sowed the rue, I sowed the mint,
I sowed the lilies white,
I sowed my days so youthful
Amongst the flowers of rue.

The rue did sprout, the mint did sprout
The lilies white did sprout,
My youthful days did also sprout
Amongst the flowers of rue.

The rue did bloom, the mint did bloom
The lilies white did bloom,
My youthful days did also bloom
Amongst the flowers of rue.

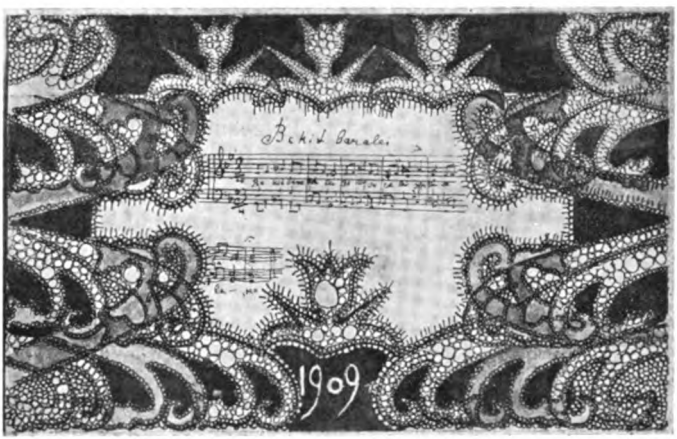
I gathered rue, I gathered mint
I gathered lilies white,
Gathered also my youthful days
Amongst the flowers of rue.

The rue did fade, the mint did fade
The lilies white did fade,
My youthful days did also fade
Amongst the flowers of rue.

But those who sang this ballad for me, were also very young. As a rule the Lithuanian peasants sing in a serious lingering manner, I often saw them close their eyes, in order to lose themselves intirely in the song. Every one knows songs and ballads and everyone sings, but in every village there are always some who are acknowledged to sing better, more correctly, who know better how to sing each song according to tradition. There is a great difference in hearing what one might call a connoisseur, the older people generally, compared with the younger generation; it is evident that the old songs are neither understood nor so much valued by the latter in many parts of Lithuania, a fact which is easily explained. Songs are still written but they cannot vie with the old ones, the songs of recent times are easily recognizable, as a rule the last syllables rhyme, which was not the case with the old songs and ballads, except as far as humourous songs were concerned, or the always selfrhyming diminutive endings. The newer songs have been subject to many outside influences, they are not genuine, and often both coarse and common in form and contents; still there are fresh and pretty songs amongst them, especially those following old traditions. When a group of young people are gathered together and begin to sing — there are a number of alternate songs, the young men and maidens each have their verse, no doubt a remnant of ancient games of allurement between marriageable men and maidens — it may perhaps happen that the spirit moves one of those present and if she, for the maidens are supposed to be the best poets, gets hold of a frag-

ment of a known song she follows her fancy and adds the words she likes; are they too long for the melody, one or two syllables are cut off, if the accent is awkward for the tune it is removed.

The Lithuanians in their songs pay no heed to the speaking accent, a song cannot keep time if one were to recite it with the ordinary accents. It has to be song, and the melody is often graceful and distinctly accentuates the meaning of the words. One wonders how these peasants are able to gart their



simple thoughts in such a pure and noble form, at least as far as the old songs are concerned.

It is not because these songs of the people only depict that which is bright, and noble, and rosecoloured in the life of man, there is plenty of sorrow and injustice, plenty of evil thoughts and deeds in these songs, but it is as if everything had been seen by eyes and understood by souls elevated high above meanness and malice, and yet these eyes and these souls belong to those who were to lend contents and form to these songs! But these peasants, earthbound, little and narrow in thoughts and deeds, have when called upon always been able to raise their mind above the commonplace level. The life of a Lithuanian was not so entirely ideal, so exclusively pure and beautiful that reality alone could furnish the poems with their due measure of inspiration. But man cannot create anything, all he brings forth is but transformation. Lithuanian poetry is not imaginative, and yet it contains, must contain vague representations from the earliest times, representations extending far beyond the Lithuanian people themselves; the fundament in these songs is certainly to be found in real life, but it is removed from its real position,

and enhanced in a radiant realm of ancient tradition, a tradition from which everything mean and low has been washed away in the purifying process of time, a testimony to the sound taste of original uninfluenced man. They are pearls gathered with much toil one by one in the course of years, in the course of centuries; a wreath of happy impressions from the sky, the forest and the field, from the stream and the sea, a little army of beautiful sentiments which here have found their true form. They have, all of them, formed that treasure house from which the poetry of the people have drawn strength for expansion. This is why the poets of these songs do not embark upon a wild shoreless ocean, they keep a steady course across sunny seas, guided by familiar landmarks.

Most of the Lithuanian village poets in reality do nothing more than slightly turn the kaleidoscope of their country's poetry, hence this wealth of variations on the few motifs. All from the youngest children to the old white haired people, have drunk it in with their mother's milk, they have heard them repeated times without number, until they themselves involuntarily joined in, adding what lay in their power.

The melody is inseparable from the people's poetry, the words alone would never give a full and true conception. It is therefore a somewhat difficult task to transpose the poetry of the Lithuanian people to ordinary European verse; one must endeavour by rhyme or wording to give the verses a colour which will produce some idea of the nature and the beauties of the songs. In olden times the people did not content themselves with singing alone, these songs required an accompaniment which consisted in beating the "kanklés" a musical instrument something like the lute, with seven or nine strings, the sacred numbers of heathenish Lithuania. It is difficult duly to understand the music of Lithuania without knowing the sounds emanating from this instrument, according to which the songs have formed themselves. The people have long ago given up and forgotten their "kanklés", it has now become exceedingly rare, although a few are still to be found here and there in the country, in the possession of lovers of antiquities, and in museums.

To sing and make verse has been a craving of the soul for this people, and not, as Henrik Ibsen calls verse, a chain for the thoughts.

The Lithuanians are now too highly developed to preserve any longer the oldest forms of lyric poetry, the pure childish voicing of the mood; the artistic sence insists upon more than this in Lithuanian, but one knows such ditties from other peoples of lower standing.

When an altogether unsophisticated child of nature sets out on his sledge

on a bright frosty day, white with snow, and has that sense of well-being which the beauty of nature instils into every sound human soul, he involuntarily exclaims, when driving past a wild rose bush decked with hoar frost and full of red hips: "Oh, thou little wild rose bush! — thou little bush, oh bush, oh bush, until some new object of beauty or interest meets his eye, an ice covered boulder, a leaping hare — and then there is a song for them.

One feels there is in many Lithuanian songs this inspiration of the moment. I will quote an example or two: a young man who is afraid that the path of love will not be smooth for him, sits sadly on the garden fence, the wind blowing his locks about:

My hair so wavy,
So soft and auburn!
Let but the wind torment thee
And wildly blow and toss thee;
T'is thus my heart is beating
In unrest and despair.

Or this:

Dear and youthful sister sweet, good evening!
To what feast hast thou invited guests?
Will ye wander in the garden,
Will ye gather rue leaves greenest,
Binding them in pliant wreath,
And thy smooth fair hair embellish?

Dear and youthful brother brave, good evening!
To what feast hast thou invited guests?
Will ye go into the stables,
Feed the sleek and dark brown trotter,
Place upon it saddle fine
And set forth in gay and festive fashion?

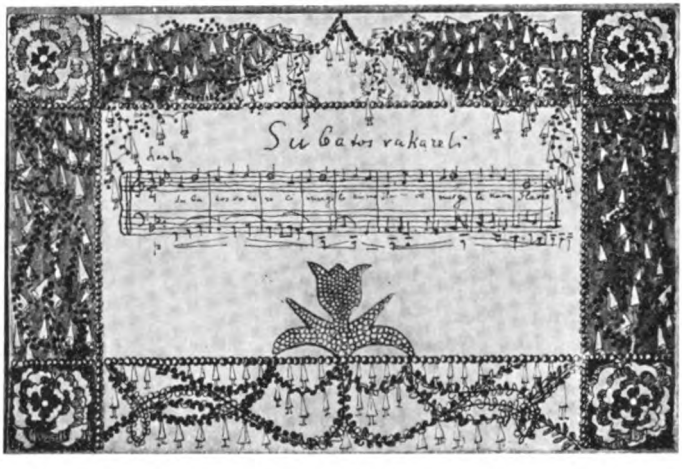
Is not this a scene from every day life transposed into verse.

Or the following lines in which a coy maiden declines the offer of a plain wooer, straight off:

That peony
With hundred petals
Is not so sweetly scented
As gaudy is its flower,
And youthful swain,
That horseman plucky,
Is not so fair to look at,
As sweet should sound his pleading.

One can picture the maiden holding in her hand the peony presented by the wooer, and being struck by the comparison.

One finds the Lithuanian song, fresh as a bud in May, can trace it as an embellishing companion through all the doings of the people, and see it swell whenever the mind is most in need of an expression for its feelings. One can learn from it where in the world of thought, the feelings of the Lithuanian run deepest. It is said by some who know these songs that they possess a strange chaste purity, that there are not a trace of sensuality in them. This I consider is an exaggeration; in the poetry of the Lithuanian people as in all other poetry one can meet with coarseness and



lack of purity, but this disappears in that wealth of pure and elevated poetry which is the heritage of this people, and I have endeavoured to explain how the poetry of such a peasant nation can be so pure and noble. This in any case is not due to a Christian conception of sin, although some clerical gentlemen have maintained it was so, for there is no trace of Christianity in the Lithuanian songs. There is hardly the faintest allusion to Christian subjects and ideas in the "dainos". The name of Jesus is never mentioned, but old heathenish associations are often intermingled in them.

The "dainà" lauds, in the loftiest strains, the love of the children for their parents and the love of the mother for her child; the next place is given to the love of sisters and brothers, and first after these comes the love between man and woman, as it behoves a people with such rooted patriarchal customs.

The famous cuckoo song, which also exists under other forms in other languages (in Greek and Sclavic) settles the precedence in the matter of love:

I rode over the bridge
And fell from my chestnut,
In the depths of the river I fell.

I lay there alone
Three long weary weeks,
For no one was longing for me.

Then came through the darkness,
With beating of wings,
Three cuckoos so fair and so fine.

One sat at my head,
One sat at my feet,
They sat them down and cuckood.

But the third cuckoo,
The fairest cuckoo,
The third sat close to my heart.

My bride at my feet,
My sister at head,
But mother dear close to my heart.

My bride she mourned
In three full weeks,
But my sister in three full months.

My own mother dear,
My mother beloved,
She mourned until she died.

My bride came with me
On the level road,
My sister to churchyard gate.

My own mother dear,
My mother beloved,
She followed me to the grave.

The child's love for father and mother has found expression in a number of beautiful songs; the following dainá is sung by a young maiden returning to her home, and in which she describes her ceaseless untiring search for her beloved parents:

"Meadow's mother, Queen of flowers,
Say where shall I plant my fair rose?"
"Plant thy fair rose on the mountain,
Near the white stones of the ocean."

"Meadow's Mother, Queen of flowers
Help me find my father, mother"
"Look for both high up the mountain
Near the white stones of the ocean."

From the earth there sprang a rosebush,
To the clouds did reach its branches,
And I climbed unto the white clouds,
Climbing up the rose tree's branches.

There I came upon a fair youth,
Mounted high on prancing chestnut,
Hie, oh Horseman wild and cunning,
Hast thou seen my father, mother?

Dearest maiden fair and youthful,
Go to Niemen's green-clad lowlands
There thy father and thy mother
Celebrate thy sister's wedding.

Then I went to green-clad lowlands.
Oh good morning dearest father!
Oh good morning, dearest mother!
Why did you forsake your daughter!

Out ye sent me amongst strangers,
I grew up so sad and lonely.
But at last I found the way home
Where my childhood's days were joyous.

My father went a hunting
In meadow, field and wood
His little daughter sleeping
Still in her bright hued bed.

When father from his hunting
Unto the crossways came,
He saw his little daughter
On the dark forest path.

Where art thou going dear one
So lone and motherless?
Oh father mine, I long so
To mother's grave to go.

Her little arms she folded
Around her mother's cross:
"Oh mother mild and tender
Rise up and smooth my hair!"

My own dear little daughter
To thy step-mother go,
And she will smooth thy tresses
And bathe thy tearful face.

When she my tresses combeth
She pulls and tears my hair;
And when my face she batheth
She rubs it, oh so hard.

And when she puts upon me
My shift, she twists my arm,
And when my belt she buckles
My tears begin to fall.

Sisters and brothers keep together from their early childhood, born under the same roof, their whole little world is confined within the same narrow limits; they help each other in little things and great, the little sister always calls upon the brother for help when there is trouble ahead, he is the protector of his young sister's honour and she turns to him with confidence. No sacrifice is too great to help a sister or brother in need.

But a sister's love for the brother first fully asserts itself when the war horn is sounded, that distant thunder which in a Lithuanian village is only felt as a summons to arms of the young men who shall gather under the flag. The folk songs depict the next message from the war, a riderless horse tearing home with its blood stained saddle — a raven bringing the hand of the beloved one.

High through the air came
The wild swans flying
Forward they summoned
The men to battle.

Of youthful brothers
And men in numbers –
Have we then no one
Who thirsts for honour?

We follow brother,
Come sister dearest,
The parting hours we
Will spend together.

One youthful sister
His belt did buckle
The other sister
The gateway opened.

Oh brother, brother
When ridest home thou,
When will again thou
Our roses gather?

Oh sisters, sisters,
Ye much beloved,
When red the roses
I will be with you.

Red were the roses
One Sunday morning,
But yet he came not
To still our longing.

Oh hillside, sister,
We will wait our brother,
At hedge of ash trees,
The place he knew well.

And long we waited
And days kept passing,
And yet he came not,
Our much loved brother.

And down we bent it,
The hedge of ash trees,
And yet he came not
Our much loved brother.

We then saw coming
His gallant charger,
The gilded stirrups
Hung loose and chattered.

Come dearest sister
We'll stop his charger,
And we will ask him
Where is thy master?

Our brother's charger
Wilt thou not tell us
Wherefore alone now?
Where is thy master?

Your brother's fallen
Before the foemen;
They shot my master,
Me they let gallop.

"Oh God, oh God,
Thou God of light!
Who will now help us
To mourn and to weep!

The sun then answered
Whilst slowly setting:
Lo, I will help you
To mourn your brother.

Nine days were shrouded
In cloudy darkness
Until the sunbeams
The clouds did scatter.

Saddle lad, my piebald charger
We are off to battle!
Two young sisters weep so sadly,
I myself am sad.

Mother dear, my boyhood's mother,
Weepeth tears so bitter:
"Wheresoever fate may take thee
Someday thou must return."

Cease your weeping, friends beloved,
Someday I shall return
Should I not come back from battle,
Home my horse will hasten.

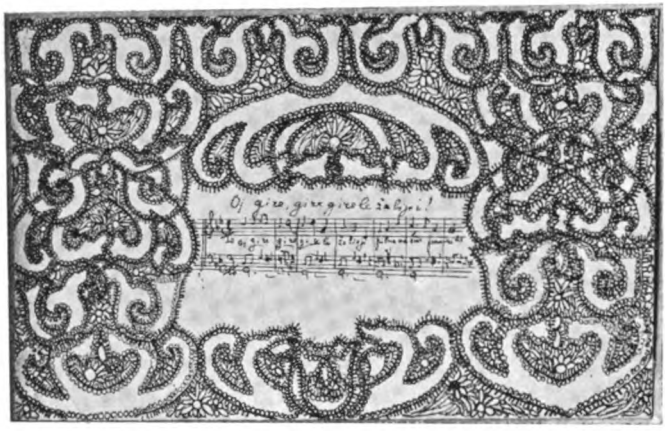
It will bring ye back my mantle
Torn and stained with gore
Who will cleanse it, who will spread it
On the hedge of ash trees?

We will cleanse from blood thy mantle
With our hands so tear stained,
We will dry thy cleansed mantle
With our burning sighs.

The first song is very ancient, the wild swans flying through the air are heathenish birds, messengers from the god of war — and people in later times have actually altered the "swans" to "Lieutenant Colonels" and even to "parish constables". Its ancient origin is apparent in the concluding verses in which the sisters call upon the Sun God for help and the Sun answers. This is one of the faint indications of the chronological order of the songs, an order which it is otherwise impossible to make out, for in all living poetry those who sing it will always smooth out the incomprehensible, that which has been forgotten and outlived, but trees and flowers are not subject to such alterations, they look now as they did then, and there are chestnut horses and pretty maidens, whether we look back a hundred years, or a hundred years forward.

Lithuanian songs of love between man and maid are nearly always sorrow and sighs. The lovers never get each other, they live their short youth in joy and hope, until death, or compulsory marriage with another, parts them for ever. Lithuanian poetry so thoroughly understands and acquiesces in

the fact that youthful love is but a field flower which perishes in the cold of autumn; there is neither anger nor bitterness, only a humble submission to the inevitableness of fate. Lovers who have been parted seek consolation in tears, in songs and in memory — not a single song points to the reunion of those who have been parted either in this world or the next — not a single word in a single song touches upon a life beyond the grave; at the furthest an heretical thought may venture to doubt that the beloved is dead, may think that life cannot have left her, only yesterday she was so fresh



and fair and rosy! In the song in which the dead speak, they only say in gentle or hard words that all prayer and appeals to them are in vain. What they say is only an echo of the thoughts of the living — "between the dead and the living all is at an end!"

In the grove's shelter
Between the lime trees
My dearest friend is resting.

And pretty flowers
His grave embellish.
A slender cross is raised there.

A sweet fresh garland
Around the cross twines
Of blue forgetmenot.

Perched in the lime tree
Against the fencing
There sings a nightingale

Upon the marble,
Against the lime tree
I'll seat myself at even.

Sad, I will weep there
My plaint I'll utter
For my dear friend beloved.

In grove of birches,
In pine tree thicket,
Upon my chestnut trotter —
My loved one's arms entwined me.

Again I rode by
The wonted roadway,
My much beloved maiden
Was then a broken flower.

Good morning, dearheart,
Thou dearest maiden
Give me again thy white hands
And say the words I know well.

Her cheek is marble,
Her heart is pulseless,
And waxen are her white hands
And silent the voice I love.

Her roving brothers
Her coffin timber
Of white wood from the lime tree,
With little panes transparent.

But for my loved one
I now will chisel
A bier of purest marble
And for each tear a jewel.

I'll let them carry
My little maiden —
Those swains so strong and youthful,
Those lads so bold and trusty.

And they shall follow
my fair-haired maiden
Unto the green-clad churchyard,
Unto the cold grey gravestones.

And I will go to
My own dear maiden
On holidays at even,
Each Sunday morning early.

I fain would know
Whether the rings are rusting
Upon her soft white hand,
Whether the flowers are fading
Entwined amongst her hair.

On green clad hill side
Amongst white lilies
And mint sweet smelling,
Against my leaning
My love is resting, —
So sweetly sleeping
Upon my shoulder.

The tomtits twitter,
The plovers signal,
A shepherd eager
His flute is playing,
And drums are rolling
And horns resounding —
My love awakens.

Saddle thy charger,
Put on thy bonnet
With youthful swagger,
Thy bright spurs buckle,
Thy mantle fasten
And grasp thy good sword.

Sweetly I slumbered —
My horse is saddled
And I must past from
My joy and sweetheart,
And tears are flowing
And flowers wither —
The bugle calls me.

In Velau's city
Stand foemen ruthless,
And thousand thousands
White tents are pitched there;
During the night watch
Wrapped in my mantle
The earth my pillow.

When day was dawning
We rode to battle.
Oh shrieks and turmoil,
Oh smoke and bullets!
And heads are flying
Like cabbage broken;
The field is bleeding.

Beneath the hillside
My lover sleepeth
And mint sweet-smelling
His couch is covering,
At head white lilies,
White fragrant lilies,
With tears of dewdrops.

Perhaps one of the prettiest songs of Lithuania depicting love's longing, and its hopelessness is the following:

Sail my boat, my slender boat,
Sail on the swift-flowing Niemen;
Set thy course towards the mountain
Covered with oak trees rugged,
Deep beneath the green-clad hillside
There rests my father beloved,
I my plaint will bring before him:
Hard and rough's my second father
Cruelly he oft me scolded
Drove me out from heart and shelter.

Sail my boat, my pretty boat,
Sail on the swift flowing Niemen,
Make for the farmstead beyond the green.
Under the flowering trees,
Modest maidens there are sitting,
At her wheel the one is spinning,
Busy weaving is the second,
And the third with silk embroiders;
But the sister who embroiders
Is the one my thoughts are bent on.

If mine I never can call her
Of sorrow and grief I shall perish,
Perhaps a grave they will give me
Under the flowering trees,
Under the budding red rose trees? —
Then singing the maidens will gather,
And break off the rose tree's branches
Gather, gather, maidens gentle!
Only do not pluck the rosebud
From the smallest of the branches.

And the youngest sister cometh
Sunday the holy, at daybreak
Gathers from the fresh red roses
Breaking the flowering trails.
"Oh how fragrant is the rosebud,
Sweetest and reddest of petals!"
Said her mother, softly weeping,
"Oh t'is not the roses' petals
But the fragrance of his spirit
For he died from love and longing."

Regret and longing are prettily expressed in the following song: A young maiden's sorrow and repentance at having parted from her lover:

From the time that I forsook thee and I no more thee saw,
My heart is filled with sorrow unto its deepest depth,
Without thee every moment is grey and sad like death,
I feel as if from grief and pain my heart would cease to beat;
And every day my eye in vain endeavours thine to meet,
I am so cowed and sorrowful, my smiles they fade away
And when I with the others go to turn the fragrant hay,
I look in vain to find thee amongst the merry swains.
Where are the joyful hours, and where are the happy days
When, trusting, we walked hand in hand and I was always gay —
Thou gathered flowers for me, I bound them in a wreath
And on thy brow I placed it and decked thee for the dance,
We often sat together in my little chamber white
So near and oh so happy in the restful noontide hours;
Thou saidst that in the wide world were many maidens fair
But of the many maidens thou only held me dear.
Alas! It was so true what thou whispered in my ear.
Oh come again my love to one thou saidst thou loved so well,
Come back again to her whose soul with love and longing filled
Has never yet been able to bid thee a last farewell.

There are also dainos which tell of the misery that follows in the wake of infidelity and seduction:

Oh, who has trampled
The murky path
Right to the lily garden?

A youth so wild
The path has trampled
Right to the lily garden.

Oh, who has broken
The pure white lily,
My fragile maiden jewel?

A youth so wild
The lily broke,
Thy fragile maiden jewel.

Oh, pain and sorrow
My lily suffered,
My precious maiden jewel!

May days of darkness
Befall the wild youth,
May maiden never love him.

A deserted maiden, alone in her sorrow and her shame, searches and searches for her lover:

T'was yesterday at even
A peasant lad me promised
My little lamb to cherish.

He is so fair and rosy
His curly hair is golden —
Such is my peasant lad.

I know not where he wanders,
If in the sea he's perished
Or vanished in the mountains.

If straying in the mountains
His foot-print would betray him —
His endless aimless searching.

If in the sea he's perished
The turbid waves would show it,
His hat upon the billows.

Ye shepherds kind, oh listen,
Say have ye seen my loved one
Between the sea and mountains.

Tell him, my lamb, my wee lamb
My only one is rambling
Homeless in wood and mountain.

A young maiden flees terrified to her brothers in fear of some rich Polish nobles who want to entice her away:

A long way off, in distant meadow,
My brothers five were harvesting.

And I the sixth, the little sister,
The noonday meal to them was bringing.

In my right hand was my bundle
And in my left my kerchief white.

Then suddenly I saw in terror
Boyars on horsebak, Polish nobles.

One roughly seized my little bundle,
The other from me tore my kerchief.

Slyly the third did thus address me:
Come little maiden, hold my chestnut.

Come little maid and hold my chestnut
And what thou asks for I will give thee.

If thou wouldst copper, I give silver
If silver, I will give thee ducats.

But no, I would not hold his bridle,
Let loose the horse on green clad moorland.

And then I fled in fear and trembling
To brothers mine across the meadows.

T'was well for thee thou didst not linger
Nor hold the bridle of his chestnut.

Thank God in heaven, little sister,
That thou didst flee unto thy brothers.

They would have torn the wreath from off thy tresses
And robbed thy finger of its golden ring.

They would have cut away thy golden tresses
And torn thy silken bodice off thy breast.

Lust and desire are rarely described in a coarse manner; the dainá prefers "sub rosa loqui". The following examples show in what a pure spirit the dainos deal with youthful desire:

My dearest mother,
My dear sweet mother,
I am so sleepy
I long to slumber.

My little daughter,
My little maiden,
In rue filled garden
T'is good and restful.

My dearest mother,
My sweet and dear one,
I cannot slumber
In rue filled garden.

The wind is wafting
The rue is nodding
I fear no slumber
Will fall upon me.

And there may wander
A swain espying
And he may harm me,
And he may harm me.

"My dearest maiden,
My little pure one,
Thou must not slumber
Nor close thine eyelids.

For thou canst slumber,
My little daughter,
On holy feast day
And night thereafter.

And thou canst slumber,
My dearest daughter,
Against thy loom, dear,
Against the framework.

My dearest father,
My good old father,
I am so weary
And I must slumber.

My son, my dear one,
So young and hardy
Thou knowst the stable
Is warm and pleasant.

My dearest father,
My good old father,
I cannot sleep in
Our horses' stable.

The horses' neighing
Is loud and noisy,
I fear no slumber
Would fall upon me.

And there may enter
A maid enticing
And she might harm me.
And she might harm me.

My lad so gallant
So young and handsome
Thou must not slumber,
Nor close thine eyelids.

For thou canst slumber,
My lad so youthful,
On holy feast day
And night thereafter.

And thou canst rest thee,
My son beloved,
In fragrant clover,
Upon the haystack.

Lithuanian folk songs are not always serious and do not always favour sombre colouring; there are also dainos full of fun and mirth:

Singing whilst I sowed the green rue
Hi, cuckoo!
Let the green leaved rue be sprouting,
Heather brown in bloom.

And I plucked and in wreath it twined,
Hi, cuckoo!
Placed it neatly on my tresses,
Heather brown in bloom.

And I walked along the sea shore,
Hi, cuckoo!
Right along the fresh white sea shore,
Heather brown in bloom.

Then arose the summer breezes,
Hi, cuckoo!
Blew my wreath from off my tresses,
Heather brown in bloom.

As bewildered I was standing,
Hi, cuckoo!
Lo, I saw three brothers coming,
Heather brown in bloom.

Gallant swains, have ye not found it,
Hi, cuckoo!
Found my wreath of fresh rue blossoms,
Heather brown in bloom.

One did answer: no, we know not,
Hi, cuckoo!
And the second smiled: we saw not,
Heather brown in bloom.

But the third, their gallant brother,
Hi, cuckoo!
Asked what their reward would be,
Heather brown in bloom.

One I give a belt embroidered,
Hi, cuckoo!
And the second cap brocaded,
Heather brown in bloom.

But the third one, I must tell you,
Hi, cuckoo!
Golden ring I mean to give him,
Heather brown in bloom.

Cold and black the night approaches
Fiercely now the storm is raging;
Where shall I find shelter,
Where a bed to rest in?

Well I know a village maiden,
Know her sisters fair and youthful,
There I know is shelter
And a bed to rest in.

When a while I there have slumbered,
I ride onwards as I promised
Silent through the darkness,
Swinging high my fur cap.

In the following little song a sister teases her brother because he stayed at home when the others rode to war:

"Cherry tree, thou little tree,
Cherry tree, thou sweet one,
Why art thou so flowerless
Neath the snow, the white snow?"

"All the buds with hoarfrost stiff,
All the little flowers,
And the wind the branches breaks
Fresh and slender branches."

"Tell me brother, brother dear,
Little brother dearest!
Tell me why thou didst not ride
To battle and to glory?"

"Listen sister, sister dear,
Little sister dearest!
Thou art young and dost not know
The cost of fight and glory.

Countless men do congregate,
Legions without number,
Just as when on heavens high
Clouds are seen to gather.

Swiftly clask their flashing swords,
Lances bright and piercing,
Just as when on heaven high
Stars are seen to sparkle.

Aye, and bullets fly about,
Bullets hard and heated,
Just as when at father's farm,
Bees around are swarming."

Many dainos illustrate a fresh and natural conception of life, its joys and its sorrows, there is no feigned sorrow or joy. The tears at a mother's grave are just as sincere, as is the joy in the embrace of the beloved one. A youth who has lost his way, goes to sleep with a sigh in the birch grove, clasping his gun in his arms:

Glad I have my gun about me
I'll kiss it for my maiden.

And should a youth feel tired some evening, he unceremoniously sings to his beloved:

"Narrow is the pillow
And the couch is narrow too;
Make room my little maiden
And let me sleep alone."

The national poetry of Lithuania is not confined to the dainos, the people possess a host of quick and bright thoughts in their riddles, their proverbs and sayings. Not that it has taken much ingenuity or wisdom to make up these riddles; they all have their foundation in the life lived in the Lithuanian villages and are for the most part pictures in words —

A white barrel with a red spout — a goose.

An iron horse with a tail of hemp — needle and thread.

Two little sisters who cannot get to each other on account of the mountain — the eyes.

Iron boiling in a meat jar — the bit in a horse's mouth.

A small threshing floor full of flails — the mouth with the teeth.

A stable made of three boards, and in it a white horse — the grain of the buckwheat.

I broke the ice, I found silver, I broke the silver I found gold — an egg.

A little living being on a living table eating living food — a sucking child.

A black raven croaks, and the whole flock joins in — the parson and the congregation.

A one-legged mother with a hundred caps — a cabbage.

Four brothers are running as fast as they can without reaching either heaven or earth — the wings of a mill.

What is it where one does not see what one wants to see, and where one sees what one does not want to see — darkness.

A cotton child with a fat shirt and a golden cap — a candle.

The breeder of thought lying in a pool — the tongue.

According to Lithuanian tradition, once upon a time there lived an old man in Lithuania, who was called Išmintas (understanding.) He taught the people how to shoot with the bow, and how to sow corn, and also told them of all the wisdom of the gods. As long as the Lithuanians lived in accordance with his teaching, quiet, happiness and prosperity prevailed in the country. But after a time they forgot much of his teaching, many disregarded Išmintas's

commandments, and the peace and happiness of Lithuania came to an end. The wise sayings, and the manly rules of life which still survive are all supposed to hail from him:

"Evil seeds sprout without sowing, but good seed often does not sprout even if sown."

"By a man's face thou shalt know him. A low forehead signifies stupidity. A high forhead and bloodshot eyes signify maliciousness and desire for power. Thou shalt not trust a serene complacent face, it is often but a cover for all kinds of vice."

"Beer without hops, butter without salt, a horse without its tail, and a woman without virtue, are all equally worthless."

"Only immorality is childless".

"Thou canst sooner drink the ocean dry, than understand a woman's mind".

"Praise the day at even, a woman after death, thy sword when thou hast used it, and thy sweetheart the morning after the wedding".

"Do not trust in maidens, their hearts are without goodness, and their tongues are treacherous; they are always ready to commit sacrilege".

"Friendships between beautiful and evil women are like castles built in the clouds".

"Only a harlot can love a stupid and cowardly man".

"Manliness, courage, and virtue are the pillars which support the happiness of heaven and earth".

But there are also genuinely rustic proverbs, expressive of the peasants experiences:

"That farmer is in a bad way in whose fields the larks build their nests".

"When one shears a sheep, the others tremble".

"A horse has four legs and stumbles, and a man who has two legs stumbles still more."

"I am master, thou art master, who is to carry the basket?"

"A woman has long hair, but short understanding".

These and similar sayings are known all over eastern Europe, emanating as they do from a uniform way of living.

Many Lithuanian nicknames are also very telling and peculiar. — A toady is called pilvéte, that is, a little belly. A hypocrite — veidmanỹs, a face distorter. A flatterer — šunsůdega, a dog's tail. A gossip — žvánas, a door bell.

If one wishes to hear Lithuanian dainos, one should go to the young maidens or in any case to the women or children. The men do not like to sing them except in the proper place and the proper time, but to make up

for it, they know a number of fairy tales and quaint old stories. Scientists have collected many of these from all parts of Lithuania, but have not by any means got hold of them all. These stories cannot in beauty and originality vie with their lyric songs, but through them one learns new sides of the peasant spirit, especially that straight forward rustic taste and commonsense of which there is so little in the songs. The Stories also show us that the Lithuanians do not object to a good table nor a warm bed, and that the strict sense of morality, and ideals of beauty which are depicted in the dainos do not perhaps cover the whole truth.

The fairy tales are not the exclusive property of Lithuania; almost everyone of them, more or less altered, can be found amongst the Sclavic people and for the matter of that also in more distant countries. The same enchanted castles, the same beautiful princesses, the same stupid or successful swains — all these well known requisites are all to be met with in Lithuania. There is, to be sure, something peculiar in the Lithuanian versions, but as a rule they are on a smaller scale and less imaginative than in their Sclavic and German form. I will relate the Lithuanian rendering of the world famed fairy tale of the Death-ride, and intermingled with it the everliving representation of the "Sufferings of the Flax" — the long and from a human point of view, terrible treatment which the flax has to undergo from the slender stalk with the blue flowers, to the white linen has in Lithuania become a proverb expressive of tribulation and bitter pain. (Linù mukà — The Sufferings of the Flax.)

The Sufferings of the Flax.

Once upon a time, a lad and a maid served at the same farm. They had grown fond of each other, and were going to be married. But then he died. And she wept and mourned for him a long time. And she could read. — Then one night he appeared to her in a dream and said: "Expect me on Saturday, I shall come riding on a piebald horse. Put on thy Sunday clothes, collect thy belongings, and tie them in a bundle. Sit at the window, open it and wait for me. And I will come." When Saturday came she put on her best clothes and waited for him. And he came on a piebald horse. — He said: "Come, get on the horse, and we will ride to where I came from". They rode up to a churchyard. He said: "Moonlight, like the bright day. A youth is riding with his maiden. Thou living maid, art thou not afraid of riding with a dead man?" "Why should I fear being with my beloved". They rode to Hell. He said "Sit down here whilst I go in and light my pipe". Then he shouted: "Come my brethren, let us pursue the one I have

brought hither!" And they all began to pursue her. But she had understood where she was, and she fled, ran and ran as fast as she could. She looked back and saw her dead lover quite close to her. Then she threw down her holy books. They took the books and tore them to pieces. Then she turned round again and saw they were still close to her. She threw down the bundle with all her clothes. Then the maiden ran to a hut. She saw there was a light burning inside. She ran into the hut and wound her rosary round the latch.

She saw there lay a corpse on a board, and at his head was burning a tar candle, and near the table a dead cock was lying. She took the cock up in her hand. Then her dead lover shouted from outside the windows: "Thou dead one, give me the living. The door is closed with a rosary and the sign of the Cross has been made before the window pane". Then the dead sat up and said: "Why does he pursue thee?" She replied: "Wait a moment and I will tell thee of the sufferings of the flax". Then she told him how the flax is sown and how it grows up and ripens; then how it is torn up, washed out, spliced, gathered in, carried to the drying house, and heated, and afterwards broken, swingled and carded — then spun, woven, bleached, cut and sewn. — Then the dead cock began to crow.

She looked around. Instead of sitting on a chair she was sitting on the stump of a tree, and whilst a moment ago she was in a hut, she now found herself in a bog, and where the two dead had stood before her, there were now two withered trunks of trees.

Droll little stories, however, are far more frequently come upon and enjoyed, than the princess fairy tales proper, droll little stories about the wily getting the better of the simple, the most improbable incidents, exaggerations, told in the real Münchhausen style, with the same tendency as in the marriage customs, to widen the poor narrow limits of every day life. Many, probably all these motifs are to be met with in other countries, but the peculiar local colour of a Lithuanian village is not without its interests. The following is the tale of the smith who cheated the devil.

The Smith who cheated the Devil.

Once upon a time there was a smith who was greatly in luck's way. He had married a rich wife and was himself a clever workman, so he did not know what want meant. But after some years had passed, he took to drinking

heavily, spending more of his time in the inn than in the smithy, and he did not stop drinking until he had no more money to spend. When his money was all gone, he went into the forest to hang himself, but he could not at once find a tree that suited him. After he had spent some time looking about, he came upon a hunter; he was dressed entirely in green, it was the devil himself. The devil said: Hi, you smith, what are you looking for? The smith answered: I am looking for a suitable tree on which to hang myself, but I really can't find one. Then the hunter said: Why do you want to hang yourself? The smith answered: There is nothing left for me to do in the world, there is no more fun to be had, I can't drink any longer, I won't work, and no one will lend me anything; at home the wife and the children are crying and yelling because they are hungry, so I do not feel inclined to go home; this is why I mean to put an end to myself in the forest.

Then the hunter said: Things seem bad enough, but what do you really want if anyone would help you? The smith said: I want nothing but money. The hunter said: If you will pledge yourself to be mine, for seven years I will give you as much money as you care for, and in your smithy there shall always be a bagful of horseshoe nails, but when seven years are gone, I shall come and fetch you. The smith did not take much time to consider; he entered upon the agreement and when they had come to terms the hunter said: Take your knife and prick your first finger and write your name with the blood under these lines. This the smith did, and they parted, each going his own way.

When the smith reached home, he immediately began to look in every corner to see if there should not be a purse of money, and sure enough, behind the fireplace there was lying a splendid purse, full of money. When he had enjoyed the sight, and bought first of all bread and clothes and whatever else he needed, he began to put his smithy to rights, so that he could employ a number of men, and there was always a bag full of horseshoe nails in the corner. Later on he bought a lot of iron, so that no one in the neighbourhood need bother about buying any, and when he had arranged everything in the best possible way, he again began to spend all his time at the inn, playing cards and drinking, for there was now no fear of his money coming to an end. Everything went on as well as could be in the smithy; he had twelve strong men who worked day after day as hard as they were able for he paid them good wages, but he did all the work gratis for everybody, and he gave all the iron needed, whether for a carriage, or a sledge, or for shoeing horses, or whatever it might be for. Therefore everybody came to his smithy, and it looked as if a fair were held there.

When things had gone on like this for four years, three fine gentlemen came one day to the smithy, to get their horses shod. When this was done the gentlemen wanted to pay, but the men said: we don't want any pay, our master does his work gratis for everybody. But the gentlemen would not hear of this, they wanted to speak with the master and asked the men to call him. The men said: our master is at the inn, if you want to speak to him you must go there, for he won't speak to anyone here. The gentlemen rode to the inn and sent for the smith, when the smith appeared in the doorway, the gentlemen asked him how much they owed him for having three horses shod. The smith said: Dear gentlemen, in my smithy all work is done for nothing, nor will I receive any payment from you. Then said one of the three: As you do so much good for the people at your smithy, everyone must honour you and pray for you and wish you everything good, and therefore you can ask for three or four things from us, whatever you like. The smith said: As you have made me that offer, I should like to have the power, that if it should please me, anyone sitting down on my bag of nails in the smithy would be obliged to remain sitting there until I let him go. I should also like that any one plucking apples from my apple tree, which bears such splendid fruit, at my wish must remain hanging there, until I chose to let him go. As a last favour I should like anyone sitting down in my comfortable armchair to be obliged to remain sitting there, until I gave him leave to get up. The fine gentlemen promised him all this and asked him: Are you sure this is everything? The smith answered: Yes, I do not wish for anything beyond this. But the gentlemen asked him to consider if there should not be anything else, he might regret it in time to come; but the smith insisted that he wanted nothing more. The three gentlemen left him and rode away; but one of the gentlemen was St. Peter. The smith went on drinking as hard as he could, he did not even go home for his meals, but had everything he wanted served at the inn.

In this way the seven years past merrily, but at last the day came when he would have to depart, and sure enough the hunter in green came to the smithy and asked the men where their master was, "for he has to go with me to-day". The men answered: "Our master is at the inn". The hunter wanted one of the men to go and fetch him but they said: We have no time, nor would our master listen to us; if you want to speak to him you must go to the inn yourself. The hunter then went to the inn and found the smith sitting there, drinking and bragging. The hunter went up to him and said: Oh, are you sitting here quite unconcerned, enjoying yourself, don't you know you have to go away with me to-day? The smith answered: Oh

yes, I am quite aware of that, but I suppose you are not particular as to a few minutes; I want to finish my corn-brandy and you had better come and have some too. When they had finished the corn-brandy, they prepared to leave, but the smith first wanted to say goodbye to his friends. When they left the inn the smith said: I say, we might as well ride, why should we walk! The other thought it was a good plan, and the smith at once ordered the two best horses to be saddled and brought out. But there had been rain, so it was slippery, and the horses were not shod, so the smith said to the hunter it would not do to ride the horses unless they were shod. The smith then began to work with a will, and asked the hunter to bring him some nails as quickly as possible.

When the hunter, who was the devil, began to rummage in the nail bag with all his ten fingers, the smith thought: "Oh if only he could remain standing at the bag"! Immediately the devil was unable to stir from the place, "look sharp and bring those nails here", but the devil could not move a hair's breadth from the sack. When the smith saw that he could not move, he called all his men and told them to beat the devil, one brought the tongs, one a hammer, and a third a red hot iron bar, they all brought what they could lay hold on, for the men knew now that it was the devil, and that he had come to fetch their master, they therefore hammered away at him, shouting "will you leave our master alone!" To begin with he would not promise, but when they had beaten almost all the flesh from off his bones, he promised, but that was not enough, he had to swear, and then the master came and liberated him, and immediately he vanished like a flash of lightning. The next day another devil came, the master was at the inn as usual, the devil came into the smithy and asked the men to call their master. The men answered: "We have nothing to do with you, if you have any business with our master, go to the inn". When the devil went into the inn he cried out angrily to the smith: "What are you doing here, don't you know your time was up yesterday. Make haste and let us be off, I'll teach you to maltreat my comrade in such a way, to-day we two are off together". The smith was quite alarmed at this outburst, he left his corn-brandy, went home asking the devil to allow him to change his clothes as those he had on were torn and shabby. When he had changed them, he said to the devil, now I am ready but let us go through the garden so that no one shall laugh at us.

As they went through the garden, past the apple tree with the beautiful apples, the devil noticed a sweet and pleasant scent and asked the smith: "What is that sweet smell?" The smith said: It is the apples from that tree. When the devil saw it he said:" I should like to taste those apples". The

smith said: "We can take as many as we like, it would not be amiss to have some to eat on the way, let us go and shake the tree."

The devil went up to the tree and shook it so violently that the apples all fell to the ground, but when he would have let go the tree to pick up the apples, it was as if he were nailed to the tree, and it was impossible for him to get loose.

As soon as the smith saw this, he called all his men, and they treated the devil in the same way as they had the other devil, they gave him such a beating that it was quite dreadful to witness it, but still he would not give in, therefore the men continued to beat and pinch and punch and flay him, until he promised to leave their master alone, and when he had confirmed this promise by an oath, the smith set him free, and he vanished speedily. On the third day at the same time a third devil arrived, but again the smith was not at home, he was at the inn as usual, but that day however he was not drinking, he was in bad spirits because of the journey he knew he had to undertake. As soon as the devil found him, he began to scold and scream so terribly that both the smith and his comrades and the landlord grew quite frightened, but the smith did not say a single word but at once went away with the devil. As soon as they had come outside the smith took courage and asked the devil if he would allow him to go and shave. The devil had no objection to this, and they both went to the smith's parlour. When they got into the room the devil looked around him with interest, and soon discovered a handsome armchair and whilst the smith was shaving he stood and looked admiringly at the chair. When the smith noticed this he said to him: "You should try that chair, and you will find out how comfortable it is; why do you stand, you might as well sit down until I have finished shaving". The devil sat down in the chair, and was loud in praises of its comfort. When the smith had finisheds having he said: "Well, shall we go now?" The devil at once tried to get up, but however hard he tried, he could not. The smith was not a little pleased when he saw he had caught the worst of the devils, and he called all his men that they might inflict the same punishment upon this devil as they had administered to the two others. But this devil did not mean to give in, however badly they maltreated him, and in consequence it took them a long time to get over him. But the smith would on no account let him off until the devil had promised to leave him behind, and if it were impossible to make him promise, he should stay where he was. They twisted and turned his hands and his feet until they were all out of joint, but it was all of no avail; it was not until they began to beat and to poke and to burn him with dreadful, red-hot iron bars that the pain grew too much for him,

and he besought them to let him off, and promised to leave the smith behind. Then the smith said: "If you will promise and swear that in the future neither you nor any other devil will come and take me to hell, I will let you off, but if you won't you will have to remain sitting in that chair for all eternity". The devil already had had enough, and was quite aware that by his own strength he could never leave the chair, so he promised everything the smith wanted, and the smith let him go, and the devil thanking him and bowing profoundly went away. From that day no devil ever attempted to trouble the wily smith.

From that day the smith became an altered man, he went no more to the inn but stuck to his smithy, working ever harder than his own men, and as the devil no longer provided him with money or horseshoe nails, he took pay for his work. He lived for many years and grew a very rich man, but when he had lived long enough he died and went to the gate of Heaven asking to be allowed to enter. Then St. Peter said: "Do you remember, I advised you to ask for one thing more, namely to be allowed to enter Heaven, but you would not, and therefore we cannot let you in. Go somewhere else and better luck to you".

The smith consequently had to remain outside the door. Whilst he stood there pondering and speculating he saw first one and then the other being let in. Then he bethought himself of going to hell. When he came to the entrance he knocked at the gate, and out came a little devil, who when he opened the gate asked him: Who are you? and he answered: I am the smith. When some of the devils inside heard this, there was such a commotion that one would really have thought the whole place was coming down. Some of them at once sprang forward, and one, two three they closed the gate with a bang, shouting as if beside themselves: The smith, the smith, the smith! and they barred the gate with heavy irons. So the smith was not able to get into hell either, and he stood for a long time at the door thinking they might open it, but as they evidently did not mean to, he had to go back. For a long time he wandered about between Heaven and earth, but he could not find a place anywhere, and he did not know what to do with himself.

Suddenly it struck him: "I will go once again to the gate of Heaven and if they wont hear me, and let me in, I must see if I can't get in by cunning".

So again he went to the gate, and begged his hardest that they would let him in, but St. Peter said: "I cannot let you in, because once you yourself did not wish to get to Heaven".

He kept loitering about outside, and one fine day from some cause or other, there was beautiful music for the dwellers in Heaven. The smith heard this,

and he again went up to the gate and begged that he might at least be allowed to peep inside. Then St. Peter opened the gate wide saying: "Well, have a look, that much I can allow you". To begin with the smith looked wonderingly at all the glory from a distance, but then he drew nearer and nearer, only a step at a time. He wanted to look first in one direction and then in another, until he was quite close to the gate. As he stood there he took off his leather apron, and one, two, three, he had jumped to the other side of the gate, but in such a manner that he managed to fall on his leather apron. St. Peter and the others were very wrath and would have cast him out, but the smith begged and prayed: "Dear guardians of the door, I beg you humbly not to scold me so terribly, for after all I am not on your ground at all, I am lying on my own leather apron, and I really think you need not make

such a fuss about it". So they could not do anything to him, and to this very day the smith is lying inside the gates of Heaven on his leather apron.

In many districts a host of legends emanating from hyper-religious and highstrung young women, are spreading amongst the people. The priests find them in the old collections of legends, and relate them to the people, and in the imagination of the peasantry their contents are being worked upon and in some respects transformed; the personages are dressed in Lithuanian garb, and imbued with Lithuanian thought.

It is often difficult to persuade a young girl to relate anything but religious stories. The present scribe was several times very anxious to hear some fairy tales when he had succeeded in getting a little maiden seated in his chamber and encouraged her to sing and talk, and asked her if she would relate a "pasaka", but instead she would only tell him about "šventa Marija" (the holy Mary) or about "švenčiausia motyna" (the most Holy Mother of God). The latter story I will now relate.

The most Holy Mother of God.

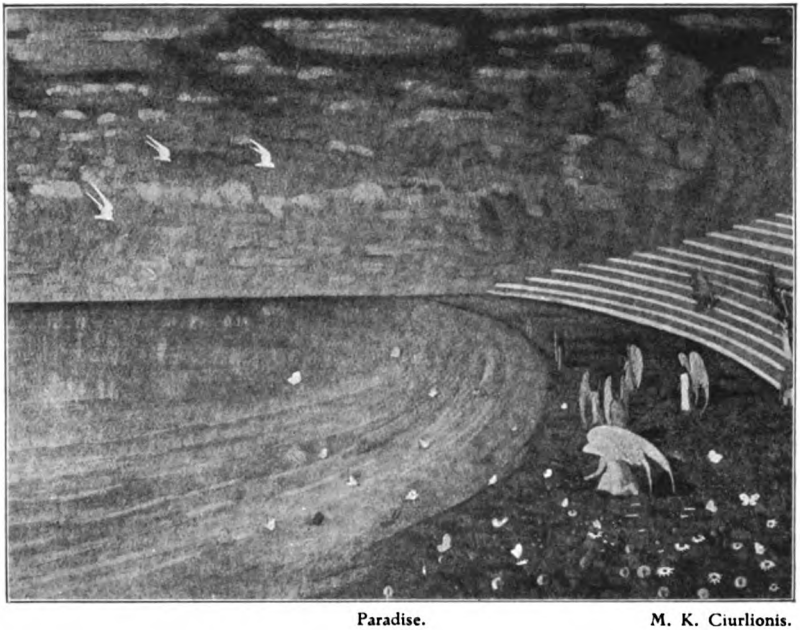
Once upon a time there was a poor old couple and God gave to them a daughter. They found a godfather for her, but they could not find a godmother. The old man went weeping through the meadow because he could not find a godmother for his daughter, but there he met the most Holy

Mother of God. She promised the old man that she would take the place of a godmother, and she said to him: "When thy daughter has completed her twelfth year, bring her to the place where thou hast met me. And thou shall call thy daughter Maruté after her godmother. When his daughter was twelve years old, the father took her to the meadow to meet the most Holy Mother of God. The Holy Mother conducted her to Heaven and in Heaven there were nine rooms, but in the ninth she was not allowed to enter. One day, however, when the Holy Mother was out, the maiden went into the ninth room. In the ninth she found God the Father who sat upon a golden throne and tiny little children were sitting on his legs, there were dreadfully many children on his legs and on the floor lay apples of gold and diamonds. When the Holy Mother came home in the evening she said: "Little Maruté, didst thou not go into the ninth room?" Maruté said: No, I did not go in. But the Holy Mother knew she was telling a lie. The next day the Holy Mother again went out, and again told her she might play in the eight rooms, but forbade her to go into the ninth; Mauruté went in all the same and played with the little children and with the gold and diamond apples. When the Holy Mother came home in the evening she asked: "Maruté didst thou go into the ninth room?" Maruté denied it to her godmother and said she had not been in the ninth room. "Maruté", said the Holy Mother severely, "tell me whether or no thou didst go into the ninth room. I will deprive thee of the power of speech if thou dost not tell the truth". — Again for the third time little Maruté peeped into the ninth room, but denied to her godmother that she had been there. Then the Holy Mother punished her, she took away her power of speech and told her she would not be able to speak again until she had admitted that she had been in the ninth room.

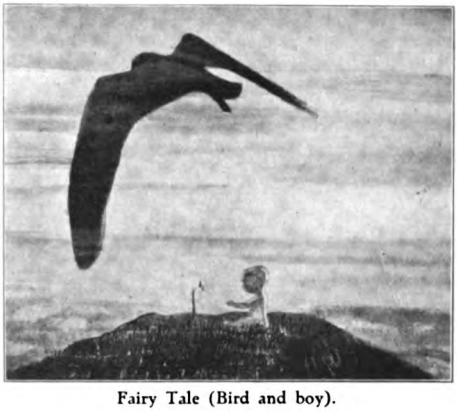
A little "Maruté".

The Holy Mother had Maruté taken to the forest. In the forest were four

trees, high and big firs, and the Holy Mother caused a little golden hut to be built between their branches, and there was also a golden carriage. And Maruté had to live in this hut as a punishment because she would not confess to having been in the ninth chamber. One day a rich and noble gentleman travelled through the forest, and he had with him two dogs, greyhounds, and when the dogs saw the golden hut they began to bark loudly. The noble gentleman discovered the golden hut between the fir trees, and he had a long ladder sent for in order to see what was in the hut. The noble crept himself into the hut, and there he found a young maiden, a golden carriage, and a golden spindle, and the maiden was very beautiful, very, very beautiful, but she could not speak. But the noble did not leave the maiden behind, but took her with him in his coach, and the rich gentleman was not married, but a bachelor, and he thought of keeping her with him, although she could not speak, simply on account of her great beauty, and in due course he married her. After a year God gave them a son, and the first night the Holy Mother of God came to Maruté and asked: "Maruté, tell me now — Wast thou in the ninth chamber? If thou wilt not confess, I shall take the babe from thee". Maruté answered nothing and the Holy Mother took the babe with her to Heaven, and the mother could not say what had become of it. And there was great sorrow. Another year passed and Maruté again gave birth to a child, a beautiful boy. But the first night the Holy Mother came again and when she asked Maruté the same question, Maruté would not answer. And the Holy Mother took the second babe away with her. In the morning there was much sorrow and lamntation, no one could understand what had become of the child. Then the mother of the rich nobleman said: Thy wife is a witch, she devours her children in the night; and the husband believed his mother. And they made a great bonfire in the courtyard, and Maruté was brought out in her silken shift and bound to the stake. Then the Holy Mother again came and asked: "Wast thou in the ninth room?" But Maruté did not answer, and the flames began to consume the wood. The Holy Mother again asked and again Maruté did not answer. — Then the flames began to surround her, but God's Holy Mother wafted them aside, and asked her for the third time: "Maruté wast thou not in the ninth room"? Then Maruté answered: "I was"! and at the same moment the fire was extinguished, the cords fell off Maruté, she could speak, and on each side of her a little son stood laughing.



Paradise. M. K. Ciurlionis.



Fairy Tale (Bird and boy).

R. WALTER. A Knights' Foray.

PART V.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

The history of the Lithuanian people can be likened to the famous star of Tycho Brahé which unseen for ages suddenly appeared in the heavens, became more and more radiant and again entirely disappeared leaving no trace. The history proper of the people of Lithuania ends where the history of most nations begins, for the factor which for almost all the nations of the present time in Europe signifies consolidation, organized power, and the advance of civilization — that factor, the introduction of Christianity, became in Lithuania a strangulating shroud over every endeavour and forward movement. The victory of Christianity became more than a misfortune for the people, it meant their fall, aye in some degree their annihilation. This struggle lasted for three whole centuries, and the people formerly so split up and

divided, were now firmly welded together in their struggle against the outside enemy, thereby attaining a short-lived power and glory — only to be vanquished later on. The whole history of the Lithuanian people is centred in "the fight against Christianity".

A singular picture of this time was formerly to be seen in Vilna, the capital of the country; for every year from the erection of its heathen temple to its downfall, a stone was inserted in the wall of the temple commemorating the year; for bad years the stones were made in the form of a cross, for the advance of Christianity was the cause of its misfortune.

The Lithuanians have shared this fate with a couple of other unhappy nations, the Letts, and the Ests, the fate of having Christianity "preached" to them by the German knights, that gang of hard fisted monks, whose religious zeal lamentably soon was overshadowed by their voracious coveteousness. Those overbearing German Junkers whose blood still flows in the veins of many a large North-German landed proprietor were by a playful fate made the apostles of Lithuania. They had learned their profession in the Crusades. "To Christen" meant to suppress or exterminate, and then to baptise the residue.

It will be easily understood that the Lithuanians could only defend themselves against this kind of missionary with the sword, and they used it in earnest.

The oldest history and mode of living of the Lithuanians are almost exclusivily known from chroniclers of the German knights, and from the remains of bygone days which the grave mounds have yielded to the archaeologist. It is not difficult to guess how the enemy who only thirsted to crush the Lithuanians has described them. According to the Germans, the Lithuanians must have been worse and wilder than the beasts of the German forest. No horror was spared in the description of this people — fortunately for the abused memory of this people, rich discoveries of interesting and peculiar antiquities have little by little been made in Lithuania. In springtime, when the rain washed away the clay from the old grave mounds, ornaments, weapons, and utensils were to be found of such fine workmanship, that the people who produced them assuredly must have stood far above the cannibals of which the chroniclers tell. And what is more, the study of languages has proved old loans of civilised words from Lithuanian to the Finnish language, not only to West-Finnish but also to the East-Finnish languages now used in parts far distant from Lithuania, loans which must at least be a couple of thousand years old.

But as a matter of fact the people themselves in their dainos supply the

most eloquent defence of the Lithuania of old, much of which overlaps the Christian era; a wild and uncouth people could not have owned songs like these. One is much nearer the truth when one views the struggle between these knights of the Cross and the Lithuanians, as a fight forced upon the latter. The German knights were surprised and enraged at finding such a manly and powerful resistance against their attemps at suppression, and many of their records have been prompted by an embittered imagination. True, the Lithuanians have been a heathen fire worshipping people, even given to human sacrifice, as have so many other European peoples, but by nature cut off from other nations the Lithuanians have been influenced by peaceful quiet, homely labour, and with little inducement for warfare and great deeds. The shores of the country, so rich in amber, their forests profuse in game, and their rich river valleys, tempted in the first instance merchants, and in their wake came robbers, and conquerors. Phenician merchants were the first to tell the world of this remote corner; as far back as the time of the visits of these enterprising merchants to the mouth of the Niemen, the Lithuanians dwelt in their present country and worshipped the God of Fire.

Lithuania and its people have not been unknown to the Scandinavians either. There are vague ancient sagas and songs which point to the fact of Vikingchiefs having landed there in past ages. Adam of Bremen relates that King Olav Trygvason after the battle of Svold proceeded to Lithuania in order to preach Christianity there. Snorri Sturluson records that when he (in the 13th century) was in Lithuania he found on the borders of the sea, people, who besides the Lithuanian tongue also understood the language of their forefathers the Danes.

It would appear as if Northern, probably Danish, Vikings had settled in Lithuania and by degrees had been absorbed in the population.

Ravaging the country must also have been child's play to these hardy warriors. The thinly populated country, with its people but little accustomed to warfare, lay with its riches open to the invaders behind the sandy shores. It was two widely different peoples who there met, the Northerners who first became really themselves in the tumult of war and battle and for whom fighting and blood were the high road to honour, joy and everlasting happiness with the gods —, and the Lithuanians who sing in their old dainos: "Accursed war, who has discovered thee? A robber has taught how to fight, a butcher has shown others how to cut to pieces the defenceless children of the Fatherland".

Old people in Samogitia as late as the 18th century remembered tales about

red-haired strangers who from "baltos jurés" (the Baltic) made attacks upon the soil of their forefathers. There is also a Lithuanian Dainá which may have reference to Viking raids. It is a young maiden's lament over the sea-robber's wild attack upon the peaceful home of her parents. The following is a somewhat free rendering:

"Oh sing, my sister,
Why art thou silent;
Why bowest thou thy dear head
Upon thy arms so weary?"

"How can I sing now
Of joy and pleasure?
Despoiled is our garden
And all our lilies faded.

Each trail of green rue,
Each rose is broken,
The prey of storm and tempest
And tears the dew is weeping".

"Did'st blow the North wind?
Didst swell the river?
Or wild Perkunas ravage
With lightening flash from heaven?"

"I'was not the North wind,
Nor swollen river,
Nor was a flash of lightening
Our garden's wicked spoiler.

In the night's darkness
From the sea, men came;
They roughly broke our fences
Laid waste our peace and honour.

Each trail of green rue,
Each rose they squandered —
They prey of storm and tempest,
Whilst dew tears wept the lily.

With terror stricken
I self escaped them
Behind the friendly shelter
Of rue, and foliage verdant".

Ere long however the Lithuanians had to face a worse enemy than the Vikings. About the middle of the 12th century, the German monk-knights made their first appearance in Lithuania, where they established themselves, building fortresses on the outskirts of the country, and Daukantas states that from that time until the year 1410, when the power of the knights was broken, the sword was never out of the hands of the people; summer and winter, day and night the Lithuanian forest-settlers had to be prepared for the onslaughts of the enemy. When the Germans first came to Lithuania it was split up into small districts, each under the sway of some big landowner or small Prince, but luckily for the people they were all united partly through the language and customs, partly through the common faith and the power of the priesthood. To begin with the fight against Christianity was led by the heathen priests. From the rumai of the High priest the staff went its round through the country, with its message of danger and disturbances, requesting the people to gather together. It took time to educate the people from being quiet forest settlers to become a people of soldiers always ready for warfare — the struggle and the figh became so desperate that the Lithuanians in many places, in order to defend life and property, had to build small homesteads and farms on islands, in bogs and lakes, with bridges easily removed, or with such frail approaches that only lightly armed warriors could pass. One can still find in the bogs oakbeams from old bridges, and in dry summers brick pillars may be seen emerging from the quagmires.

During this time of tribulation and distress, a race of rulers sprang up within the people, who, one hardly knows how, secured the leading power in the country. Russian historians try to make out the ancestor of this race to have been a White-Russian prince from Polock, but the names of these rulers are so distinctly Lithuanian that one is entitled to repudiate this explanation. The name of the first of these princes known to the chroniclers is Rinkaldis; about the year 1226 he attained to power and with him begins Lithuania's era of greatness. The German knights were decisively beaten, and the land of Lithuania extended to all the corners of the earth. His son Minaugas, a mighty warrior and bison hunter, drove back the Tatars, and it was he who won the first battle out of many which put a stop to the Tatars advancing further west; in fact it is not saying too much that the Lithuanian people, in our day cowed and suppressed, and their princes with greater right than those of Russia may claim the credit of having been the saviours of Europe from Tatars inroads and Tatar yoke. Whilst the realm of Russia lay like a chained victim of the wild Mongolians and nowhere

could offer any resistance, the land of the Prince of Lithuania became the staunch barrier beyond which the Tatars could not advance.

In order to put a stop to the plunderings of the German knights, Minaugas sent an envoy to the Pope and promised to accept Christianity if the knights would leave his people alone. He did accept Christianity and the Pope ordered the knights to discontinue their crusade, but the knights would not acknowledge the conversion of the Lithuanians; in spite of the Pope's command they went on in the same way, ravaged with fire and sword as before, and the Prince in his anger renounced Christianity, had his baptism

The principality of Lithuania in the 14th century.

washed off him, and the country remained heathen. With great pomp and solemnity the German knights who had been taken prisoners, were burnt as sacrifices to the recently forsaken gods, and the same fate befell afterward every German of noble birth who was made prisioner. To the hymns and songs of the heathen priests a mighty bonfire was built of trunks of trees; in a cavity in the midst of the trunks, the prisoner was placed in full armour and tied to his horse, no one but the God of Fire could see him, and no one could hear his cries, because the priests made a deafening noise with their drums and horns. —

It was not however until the time of the Lithuanian prince Gediminas that the country became really powerful. He was related to many Russian princes, the country expanded both through inheritance and war. Gediminas took

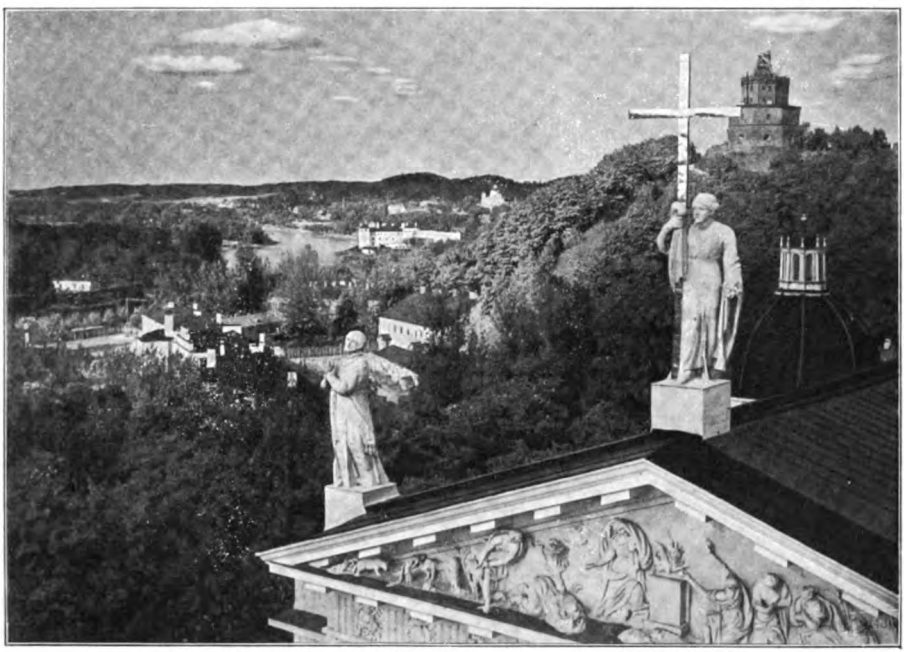
possession of provinces from the Tatars and the Russians, but the old land of Lithuania remained the kernel of his possessions, the land around Niemen and is tributaries, the land which is still called "Gediminas' heritage". In his heart he was a heathen, it was he who built the great temple in Vilna (in Lithuanian Vilnius) but like most heathens he was tolerant of other religions; Greek and Roman Catholic monks preached and converted, and churches were built, but only a small number of the people were baptized. The daughter of Gediminas became Queen of Poland, for even as early as this Poland, already in straits, began to ingratiate herself with young and powerful Lithuania; both countries had enemies in common, the aforesaid German knights, who had now entirely relinquished their attempts to Christianize the population, and only strove to increase their power and riches. Gediminas himself fell in one of the countless expeditions against the knights, but his sons, Keistutis and Algerdas, still live in legend and song; they are praised as incomparable heroes, and they must have been formidable warriors, for even the knights had to keep their greed in bounds, and the Tatars to cede lands. Algerdas died first, he was killed in an expedition against the knights; he left a number of sons, amongst them Jogaila (Polish, Jagiello) who proved so fatal to his people. The sons of Algerdas immediately began to war against their uncle Keistutis; he was overpowered and Jogaila caused him to be strangled in prison; his wife Biruté was banished to a remote spot, Palanga on the Baltic. Her son, the far famed Vytautas escaped in woman's guise. Shortly afterwards, in the year 1386, an event happened which was fatal to the future of the Lithuanian people.

Jogaila.

Jogaila, then Prince of the country, wedded Jadwiga, the youthful Queen of Poland, and this laid the foundation of the union of the two countries, a union which to begin with was anything but close, but which ended in Poland bodily and spiritually swallowing up Lithuania; almost all this country's proper rights, and the whole of its social structure broke down and disappeared. Poland, by right of its national qualities alone would assuredly never have been capable of such a tremendous conquest of a country which in area and number of inhabitants considerably exceeded Poland herself; but Poland had the Latin church at her back.

As an express condition for Jadwiga's marriage with "the wild heathen". Jogaila (he was, however, probably a Greek Catholic) his and his people's

conversion to the Latin Church was insisted upon. Jogaila in his blind craving for power agreed to everything in order to win the crown of Poland. A host of Polish monks and priests returned to Lithuania with the newly baptised Prince. The heathen temple in Vilna was pulled down and a church erected. In flocks of several hundreds the Lithuanians in and near the town were baptised, "wholesale baptism". The priests sprinkled holy water over the assembled crowds and baptised them in the name of the Trinity. Heathen-



The cathedral of Vilna built on the site of an old heathen sanctuary.

dom had fallen as a state power, the last heathenish country of Europe had been won for Christian civilization, and — the Lithuanian people were doomed to political annihilation.

Here as everywhere in the world when a transfer of power takes place, it was the misfortune of the common people that the men who were in power and their great men forsook their own people in order to preserve their position and privileges under the new conditions. In ever increasing numbers and with ever increasing zeal they turned their backs upon the old order of things, as Polish influence grew stronger, giving up old customs and their language and becoming merged in the world of leading Poles. The Court

and the high dignataries were Poles, the clergy were Poles, and all the lustre of power was Polish. Lithuania dwindled into a dependency, and became by degrees simply a province of the realm. Poland now consisted of the two main parts Korona (the original country) and Litwa. The upper classes spoke the Polish language and their patriotism was Polish in both. The lower classes became more and more a political nonentity, a flock of helots on whom rested all the labour for the supply of the country. The peasantry in Korona spoke Polish, in Litwa, Lithuanian and Russian; the peasantry in Korona had the advantage of having language and origin in common with the ruling class; in Lithuania, the Lithuanian language of was once elbowed out, and stamped as the language of serfs. The Lithuanian language which for so many centuries had represented heathendom, was banished as low and hated by God. The Russian language which in the White-Russian dialect was spoken in all the lands the old Lithuania had conquered, was too powerful and widespread to be at once held in derision. White-Russian had also in the days of Lithuania's greatness been the official language of the country. It has caused surprise to many that this was so, but one can understand this when one considers that the Lithuanians were but a small fraction of the aggregate population, although the ruler and the high officials were Lithuanians, and that they, in spite of this, on the whole were unable to vie with the White-Russian men of importance, who could act with greater weight in their dealings with surrounding Sclavic princes. In addition Lithuanian, from a literary point of view, was an entirely virgin language, whilst White-Russian and East-Sclavic already then possessed a considerable religious literature. As soon as the kingdom was made to comprise the whole of Western Russia, and when the staff of Krive-Krivaitis and the order of things peculiar to heathenish Lithuania no longer had any chance of asserting itself, the Lithuanian language from sheer practical necessity had to give way to Russian. But in the course of time the power of the Russian language also vanished; the Russian nobility, like the Lithuanian, was swallowed up by the Poles, and in the course of a few centuries, the Russian peasantry was to the Poles "misera contribuens plebs", the miserable tax-paying rabble, and the Russian orthodox confession was persecuted and despised. In the end the position of the Russians became even more deplorable and wretched than that of the Lithuanians because the latter all shared the faith of their rulers.

Lithuania did not by any means become a Christian community when their rulers and great men allowed themselves to be baptised. Heathenism flourished amongst the Lithuanians long after, longer perhaps, than amongst any other

European people. The large and powerful heathen priesthood rose in desperate resistance, and in the endless forests along the lonely shores, sacrificies continued to be made to the old gods. In fact the history of the Lithuanian people, in dying, yielded its most beautiful flower. Jogaila, the King of the two united countries, was compelled to make his cousin and enemy Vytautas, governor of Lithuania. This man whose fame deserves to be kept green through all time, was gifted and capable to a wonderful degree. His political aim was manifestly to make Lithuania once again a free country, independent of Poland, and during the thirty years he was at the head of affairs, the political influence of Poland was insignificant. He gathered together the whole of the West Sclavic world in order to fight a final battle against the much hated German knights, and at the head of a vast army comprising both Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, and Czeks he demolished the German military power. The defeat was so decisive that the power of the knights was definitely broken (year 1410), and the Lithuanians could again dwell in safety in their forest homes; these terrible neighbours who had cost Lithuania streams of blood and tears would trouble them no more. But these bloody memories for many years to come filled the imagination of the Lithuanian children with terror, and the minds of their elders with wrath and horror. An old war dance was kept up for ages, and perhaps still exists in children's games; its wild words give some idea of the powerless rage which filled the hearts of the Lithuanian foresters, when they thought of their cruel foe. One can imagine men and maidens forming a circle in the low log cabin singing to a boisterous round dance:

Vytautas crown.

Hi, there dances a devil!
He dances his breeches asunder
And naked he whirls in the dance.

Know ye that devil so loathsome,
Is one of the vultures from Riga,
And know ye that kite, the filthy bird,
Is counted our bloodiest foe.
Hop, hop, ho, ho!
Kuntaj, balabaj!
Our bloodiest foe.

That German, that minion of devils
So greedily scourges the countries.
Him we will vanquish, and conquer and crush
And squash him and pound him to pieces
Hop, hop, ho, ho!
Kuntaj, balabaj!
And pound him to pieces.

When the refrain was sung the dancers tramped on the floor and beat the tables and the walls with their fists and tankards; then one of the dancers seized the torch and swung it about, sending forth a shower of sparks and smoke over the dancers. Thus they celebrated their revenge.

Vytautas was a Lithuanian with all his heart, and it was only the Polish priesthood in their dislike for his language and his people who prevented him from carrying out a plan which otherwise might have had far reaching consequences. Vytautas's intention was to make Lithuanian the chief language of his country and the language of the court; he himself spoke Lithuanian fluently and the chroniclers relate that he liked to converse with his cousin Jogaila in Lithuanian and used this language when he did not wish to be understood by the Poles present. The Lithuanian people had also another influential friend in Biruté, the mother of the great Prince, both as regards national and religious questions. She stands out as the heroic figure of the heathen period. In her youth she was the priestess of the God of Fire, and her life at Palanga, where she remained, faithful until her death to the faith of her forefathers, in spite of all prayers and persuasion, has been perpetuated in Polish and Lithuanian poetry. Her grave mound is still to be seen near the shores of the Baltic, and although she was such a staunch heathen, the moral appreciation of the people was such, that after her death, they transformed her into a Christian saint, and she was so fervently worshipped that the priests, by way of a compromise with the will of the people, erected a chapel for St. George at the gravemound of Biruté; the chapel became a ruin, but the memory of Biruté flourished. Even up to our time women could be seen in prayer and supplication at the grave of the "Saint".

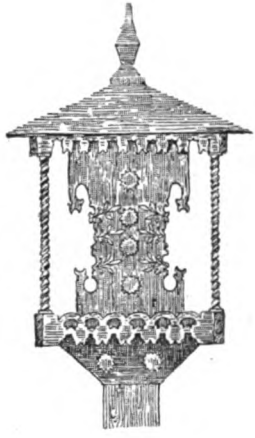
The Roman Catholic priesthood had to fight a severe fight in Lithuania before they succeeded in rooting out heathenism. The fire of the altars of the God of Eternal Fire were certainly soon extinguished, the last even as early as the year 1417, but the people for centuries continued to burn fires in secret, in order to appease the deserted gods, and continued their pilgrimages to the old holy places, so that the Christian priests often had to erect altars for the Virgin Mary or some saint at the sacred oaks of heathenism.

The people often resorted to armed resistance when their old sacred places were attacked and destroyed, and when resistance was in vain, they witnessed the destruction with shuddering sorrow. The Lithuanians made touching appeals to Vytautas: "We no longer know where to look for our god, all his houses have been destroyed and burnt down".

Jeronimus, the priest who in the 15th century travelled through the Christian land, saw to his horror, that the preaching of the Gospel was in a sad way. Once, when in a dark heathen district he tried to convince the people that the Christian God was the strongest, he called all the people together at their holy place, an oak outside the village, and bade the Christians amongst the assembly: „Those amongst you who have faith in God shall take their axes and help me to cut down this oak!" — No one came forward. Jeronimus again urged them, and at last a man advanced, took the axe, and whilst the people looked on with increasing apprehension, he raised it, but struck his own foot and fell to the ground. The people was jubilant. Then Jeronimus himself took the axe, dealing blow after blow at the oak until it trembled, and amidst the lamentation of the people it fell to the ground, for the Christians had taken courage and were helping the priest. The wounded man rose from the ground healed. The holy oaks which was not cut down were embellished by the priests with pictures of the Virgin and lamps, thereby gaining an easy victory for God, for the people when kneeling to their own gods became accustomed to worship the Christian God. The idols were either destroyed or the heathen concealed them in the bogs or the depths of the forest. These "stone-women" as they are now called may often be seen as corner stones or boundary marks, coarse stone giants with short arms and big round eyes; a pattern is often cut out in the garments, giving some idea of the dress of the people in heathen times.

Perkunas.

A little household god however was faithfully kept by the Lithuanians far into Christian times, aye, even to the present time. It was the household snake, mentioned by Jeronimus. Each farmstead, each outlying house kept its tame snake, of a non-poisonous species. It was fed together with the children, drank milk from the same bowl, and if it became too aggressive the children hit it on the head with their spoon. No home could be happy without this black friend and in many houses a little black lump of them might be seen in the room near the fire. This old superstition is still kept up to this day in many a big farm in Lithuania and White Russia. The



Lithuanians altogether have found it very difficult entirely to give up their old gods.

But time moves on, Lithuania has become Christian, and as behoves the youngest child in the great flock, it is Christian in the true way of a child, without doubts or misgivings. Instead of Perkunas, they now say Christ, for every altar of fire there is now a church or chapel, and over the whole country wooden crosses stand at the crossways for the consolation of the wayfarer. Church going and bell ringing, confession and absolution, holy societies and pilgrimages, hover solemnity like a mist over this little people and it is not inappropriate when the Poles call Samogitia "swięta", the holy. The Lithuanians listen in confidenceand reverence to the teaching of the church and obey its priests; the latter are honoured with the name of king, kuningas, signifying priest.

The people gave everything they had to give for Christianity. They gave up the dignity of the nation, they gave up their political independence, their own peculair civilization, their fields and forests, and in the end their personal liberty. The people were transformed into a non-possessing host of serfs whose language and customs were held in derision, and where victory for the individual only became possible if he denied his mother and became the oppressor of his brothers.

History has run its course. Disarmed and impotent the Lithuanian people sank lower and lower. Their kinsfolk, the Prussians, had long ago been scattered and effaced from the earth. Lithuania itself was torn in two parts the one, the country around the lower course of the Niemen, passed under German sway, it became a Brandenburg possession, and later it was made part of the kingdom of Prussia, whose name reminds one of that grave of a people on which the realm was built up. The other and far greater part shared the hard and cruel fate of Poland; together with Poland the country fought in time of sore trial, giving up its riches, its manhood, and its labour for the defence of that cluster of freedom loving tyrants who were the glory of Poland, and became her destruction.

Together with Poland her Lithuanian lands fell into the hands of the rulers of Russia.

The arms of Lithuania in the 15th Century.

LITHUANIA

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

P. RIMŠA.

Oh my mother, little mother,
Say for what thou hast me fostered?
Was it but for bitter labour?
Was it but for bitter weeping?

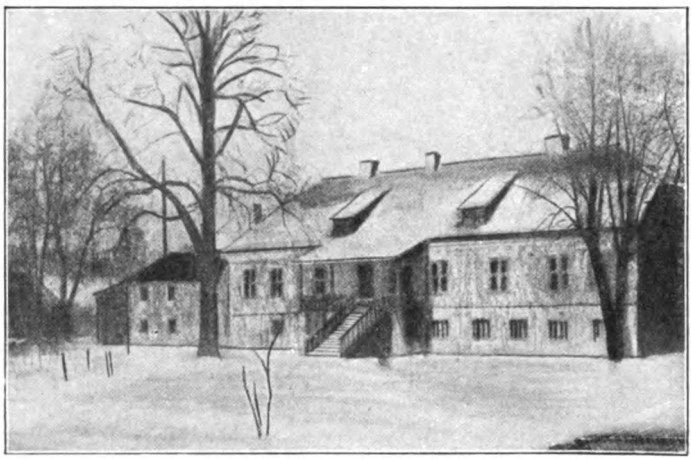
Best for me if in the river
I was lying softly bedded.
There perhaps was peace and quiet
With the bright fish in the water.

I must serve my cruel masters,
Never happiness nor leisure.
The sun has set, the moon appears
Grant to me a holy even.

(Lithuanian folksong).

Many people have passed through Lithuania without knowing it or giving it a thought. The big railway lines which connect the capitals of Russia and Germany cut right through Gedimina's heritage, right through the land where the Lithuanianian peasants still reside. Seated in the comfortable

trains, men and women view indifferently the somewhat monotonous country with its wide acres of waving corn, with its undulating woodlands of birch and maple, oak and fir. One rushes past low wooden homesteads, and the trains stops at stations with peculiar names, Schillen, Pilkallen, Gumbinnen, Eydtkuhnen, names which are meant to be German and yet sound so foreign; but it is only these names which interfere with the idea that one is travelling in Germany. Everything in the train is German, the passengers, the guards, the printed regulations; the railway stations look like those of Rhineland and Hanover, there is the same red capped "Vorstand", the same high-shouldered primness in the barmaids, the same waiters in the same "alldeutsche" dining room. Then one reaches the frontier, one sees for the last time the black, white and red flag, the spiked helmet and German order — across the line and you are in Russia. Passports must be shown, and one sees placards in those angular letters which rather annoy one because one does not understand them. Dark blue gendarmes with red braiding parade the deserted platform. Then the custom house officers arrive, carriages are changed, one gets Russian cows and hears the Russian tongue, as one might expect having arrived in Russia



Main building on a large Estate.

Landscape.

— and the train steams on its way. Again stations which for the uninitiated might pass for Russian, but which to the Russians themselves have a foreign ring: Gielgudiški, Vilkoviški, Pilviški and so on. In the carriages, Russian, German and perhaps Polish are to be heard. Gendarmes and black bloused soldiers with round caps, bells, long boots and grey mantles flung loosely over the shoulders are to be seen at each station and as a most peculiar type, novel to us Westerners, the celebrated Polish Jew, his loosely knit figure in his shabby clothes with his bent hands, and unkempt beard, this aggregate of ugliness, who at first sight seems to explain everything — his character, his mode of living and his Pariah existence. Half a day and half a night has passed during which one has slept or lazily gazed at the flat country, listened to the wheels thundering across the river bridges, or rattling through pine forests. One may have noticed with some interest a group of longlegged Cossacs with flat caps and thin necks who have pulled up on their small ugly horses near to the railway line, they are so like what one has read about that one cant help feeling a little amused. Or one may have noticed clumsy wooden carriages harnessed to three fat horses which eagerly paw the ground and snort in answer to the driver's chatter; they have come from the neighbouring manor house to meet the squire on his return from his trip abroad. Here and there gilded or green bulb-shaped domes are quickly passed and at last one pulls up at a big town, Dünaburg, and one has traversed Lithuania, of a truth without being any the wiser. Perhaps some one may have noticed and again forgotten an odd man or two in light grey wadmal, and an odd woman or two with kerchiefs on their head hiding their faces, perhaps some one may have noticed with pleasure the neat appearance of the log houses, with their carved gables and upper structuees, some one may

The goose-girl.

Old Lithuanian woman.

have observed the slender stack roofings and the countless flocks of geese, attended by neat little maidens. One may even whilst the train slowed up have caught a fragment of a goose-girls shrill singing. Those who have seen or heard that much may boast that they have not travelled in vain. They have seen as much of Lithuania as is possible from the window of an express train, for it is only a glimpse and one has to be observant even to catch that.

"Lithuania" has been forced into the background, a long way off the high-road of life. The inhabitants of this country may be likened to an army which has been beaten over and over again in a fight against a foe of overwhelming force, and has been compelled to give up to the enemy every fortification, every stronghold, which has been split up, and hounded down, but which all the same persists in carrying on a little war of self-preservation behind every hedge and from every house.

The people have been driven away from their own highway and one often has to take to the byways in order to find them even within the domain of their old land proper, which however is curtailed more and more year by year.

It is impossible to state accurately how many Lithuanians live on Prussian and Russian territory; the people themselves have no idea, all they know is that they are feeble and powerless, and that their language is barely known outside their own villages; nor do the official Prussian and Russian statistics give any exact information. In Prussia the statistics certainly pay some heed to the different languages, but in certain districts every person confirmed in the German language is counted a Germain. In Russia all statistics in this connection are of comparatively little value, as people according to oriental fashion are scheduled according to religion; the Protestant Lituanians are scheduled together with the Germans, the Greek Catholic with the Russians and the Roman Catholic are banded together with the Poles.

The boundary which separates Germany from Russia and which runs through Lithuania has also effectually divided the two parts of the people, and has bestowed upon them widely different conditions of life.

The alien peoples under German yoke generally sigh under a severe and petty administration, under bureaucracy and a strictly legal order of things, prying into every corner. In Russia it is just the opposite; there the terror of the suppressed arises from disorder and excessive arbitrariness, sometimes unreasonable and violent persecution, when that suits the authorities in question, sometimes dilatoriness and carelessness, if that is considered

Fisher huts on the Baltic.

more expedient and advantageous. It is interesting to notice the effect the different "systems" in course of time have had upon the Lithuanian people. It is of deep pyschological importance to observe how this slow murder of a nation has proceeded. For us Danes, who with the warmest interest watch the struggle of our countrymen to the south of the Kongeaa (which stream forms the boundary between Denmark and Sleswick) it is highly instructive to watch the progress of the Germanizing process in another corner of the empire, Prussian Lithuania, amongst a population which in numbers very nearly corresponds with the Danes in North Sleswick, but with regard to power of resistance is far inferior to the Danish Sleswickers. The suppressive methods of Prussia are the same in both places, but the human material is more pliable and docile in German Lithuania.

Diogenes is supposed once to have been looking for men, lantern in hand, without being able to find any. The present writer almost felt tempted to do the same thing in order to find the Lithuanians the first time he visited their country.

A scholar well versed in Lithuanian gave me the names of some villages, where the language was supposed to be particularly pure. One August day I left Ragnit (Lith. Ragainė) in the yellow German mail coach. Ragnit was formerly a Lithuanian fishing village and is now a small German town with paved streets, and I was disappointed even there to hear no word of Lithuanian. It was a tedious drive past fields of rye, acres of flax, through forest of firs; opposite me in the coach sat a prim little lady with the same destination as myself, and what was more natural than that we should converse about the goal of our journey, about the Lithuanians and the Lithuanian language. My practical knowledge of the language at that time was scanty, and half embarassed I said in German: "I suppose you speak Lithuanian perfectly?" — "Oh, dear no, not a word. We don't know it at all, it is only the peasantry, the very poorest who speak it". — "But surely the village is Lithuanian?" I asked somewhat anxiously. "No, the people there are German, they all speak German".

Alas, she was right. We arrived at the very heart of Prussian Lithuania, and what I saw was a little German town, the surroundings were delightful enough, but where were the Lithuanians? Little by little I discovered them, in the outskirts of the town, in the poorest huts, or in the service of Germans, a Lithuanian maid here, a Lithuanian lad there, and in the surrounding small hamlets; below the forests of firs, in the low timbered houses, the window panes of which were gilded by the setting sun at eventide I found the Lithuanians in a grove of gnarled cherry trees.

The little town had already outgrown everything Lithuanian, only the humblest, the meanst and poorest remained Lithuanian. As soon as a single place in these parts attains to even the slightest importance, as soon as even a wheelwright's workshop, a brewery, a factory, let alone a railway, or a high school is built, the Germanizing process inevitably sets in. It has spread, powerful and overbearing, wherever it asserts itself, everything desirous of rising in the least degree above the low level must become German. The Lithuanian and the Lithuanian language are the subject of every man's smiling contempt, and the Germanizing process has no better ally than this contempt for everything Lithuanian. First the Germans despise them, and then they despise themselves, these poor creatures, despise and conceal their own national origin, and their last mainstay is gone. Yes, it is undeniable that this people has fallen low from a national point of view, whereever the Germans have appeared on the scene. These Germans, with their royal stamp of power and kultur, have come to these quiet Lithuanian villages in the forest and wildernesses of Eastern Prussia, they have brought with them a hyper-confident assertion, a solid capacity for work, and an inherited mental superiority, and they have forced the Lithuanians to their knees.

The Lithuanian part of the Prussian kingdom was for a long time allowed to remain untroubled by German kultur; it seemed to eschew Lithuania. The country was permitted to remain an idyl, and "East Prussia" still has a certain romantic mystic ring in the ear of a German. It was long before the railway invaded the country, the peasants lived in quaint wooden houses ornamented with carving, cultivated the soil, and atê red cherries(!)

Almost the whole of the peasantry eastward has been Lithuanian, of which many names of places bear wittness to this day. There certainly were Germans, German officials and Germans in the towns, and there were even German peasant settlers, but they were not numerous enough to suppress the Lithuanians with whom they lived peacefully side by side, until they or their children naturally became Lithuanianized. Free from the restless wear and tear of the age as the country then was, outside history, homely peace and happiness flourished. The people wore national dress, and lived according to the customs of past centuries, celebrated festivals, quarreled and made it up. In folk song and fairytale and in a fervent religious life, the mind found what nourishment was needed for the modest demands of life. For the peace of their home and the protection of their liberty, the Lithuanians thanked their ruler and king, the Prussian monarch, with the most genuine reverence and love, and the royal house in times of trouble has benefitted from the affection of this little people. The king shared with God

the name of "Viešpatis" — Father of all. With joyful songs the Lithuanian maidens rode out to welcome their king when on rare occasions he visited this distant province. Almost all the priests were sons of Lithuanian peasants, and so were the schoolmasters. The instillation of learning was not taken so seriously at that time, nor was it necessary.

The Lithuanians quite understood that they were a small and weak people, and that the ruling nation, the Germans, lived beyond the dark forests; in many things they looked up to them and respected their ability and superior knowledge. It was considered a fine thing when a Lithuanian maid married a German, and it was thought to be advantageous for a young Lithuanian to go out into the world and learn something from the Germans, but this only rarely happened — and the people still knew that they constituted a nation and possessed a country. On the other hand there was early an inclination to imitate the Germans and to "become fine"; even Duonelaitis mentions this in his great heroic poem about Lithuania. He lived in the middle of 18th century, was the priest of a Lithuanian village, and loved his country above everything. He is the first, probably the only national poet of the Lithuanians, he was most desirous of doing everything in his power to strenghten national feeling in the Lithuanian community, and in the spirit he saw the dangers which threatened them. He saw unmistakeable signs of the people falling away from their own simple customs.

His principal work was called "metas" — The Year. It is a poetic description in heavy classic garb, of the labours and pleasures of the Lithuanian people throughout the year. He says warningly:

But when the world now began to strut, conceited and haughty
And Lithuania's honest and hard working folk with the Germans did mingle,
Oh for the virtues of old, now vanished and leaving no traces.
Full of contempt the men have discarded their old fashioned rush shoes,
As for the maidens they look with disdain on their bright coloured garments.
Proudly the lads strut about with new fangled boots made of leather.
Lazy and useless the maidens in German dresses are gadding
Just as a damsel would do intawdry and flimsy apparel.
— Thus Lithuanian virtues will surely be courting their downfall.

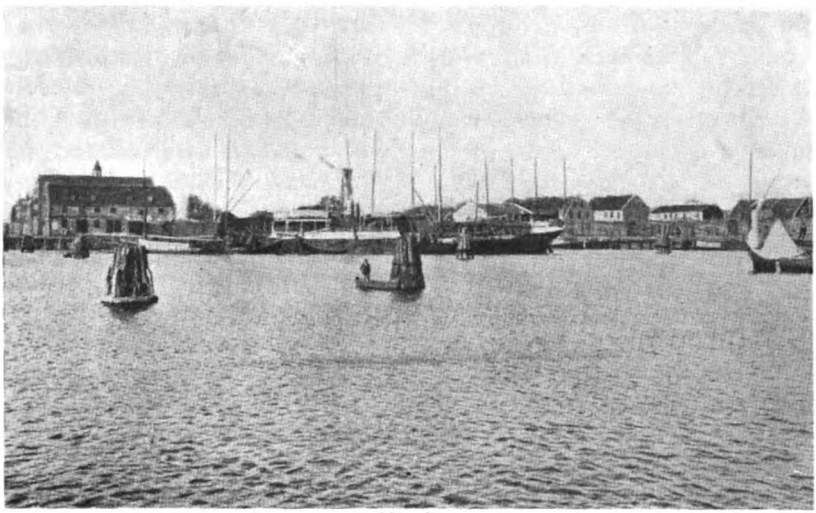
It was appearently on slender grounds that Duonelaitis founded this gloomy prophecy, but it was sufficient. But just in this poor and outward imitation of the customs and dress of the more cultivated nation and by learning to look down upon and despise their own home-values the people stripped themselves of their only national treasure, their most precious poses-

sion, their home kultur. For a people with a history and ancient devolopment, the transforming of the outer life after a foreign pattern may not matter so much, but it was everything for a child nation like the Lithuanian, it meant everything, it was the foundation upon which they should build in time to come.

The German "Drang nach aussen" at last discovered Lithuania, and the struggle for the soil and for mastery in the narrowest sense now began. It was the Germans who were victorious. Where they planted their foot, it stood firm, and the land's own children like frightened game disappeared, further and further away in outlying districts and forest villages — or they had to be Germanized. No great coercion on the part of the rulers was needed; by degrees as the Germans increased in numbers, German churches and German schools were erected, and much of the land owned by the Lithuanian peasantry passed into the German posession. The Lithuanians were altogether unable to face this struggle, and there was no one to give them a helping hand. Those who retreated to out of the way places grew poorer and poorer, and their horizon became still narrower, they became dulled and stupified, and those who mixed with the foreigners and became Germanized remained on a lower level and only in exceptional cases rose to the standard of the invaders.

Notwithstanding this the conquerors probably found that things did not move fast euough. Considerable districts in the northern borderland still remained comparatively uninfluenced in their old Lithuanian condition, all over the country there were tracts of land unaffected by Germain influence and the passive resistance which the Germans met with in many places impeded rapid exploitation. The Lithuanians' somewhat difficult language was an obstacle to those who settled in these outlying eastern districts, a knowledge of it was indispensable in their intercourse with the people. The Germans, in these outskirts of the realm amongst an unknown foreign people, could not help feeling a somewhat uncanny discomfort; it was certainly within "das Grosse Vaterland", but they did not feel quite safe in the nests they built there, and there was a feeling that they must consolidate their position in the country. The first desire for forcible Germanizing emanated less perhaps from the Germans dwelling in Lithuania, than from the nearest German centres, from the old towns in Eastern Prussia, Königsberg, Tilsit and Memel. The upper class and the merchants, and unfortunately at times also the university in this district, looked upon it as their special mission to gain land for Germanism. Every official bureau, every schoolroom became more and more consciously an eager workshop in the

service of the Germanizing process, and as the German "national feeling" swelled the zeal for destroying the little nation increased. The Lithuanians were represented as an increasing danger for the German people, as an unreliable border population, and in the end the word "Pan-Sclavics" was in everybody's mouth, a most absurd notion, but the intention of the Germans was plain enough, they wished for more effective methods to be adopted in the fight against this feeble people. The more intoxicated Prussia became with power, the narrower grew the limits for Lithuanian language and Lithu-



Memel.

anian life in East Prussia. The officials of Eastern Prussia had found a new field on which to gain honour and advance; the Germanizing of Lithuania became a new "Streberthum" for those who desired to thrust themselves forward.

The whole position of the Lithuanian people was changed at a rapid pace; they wanted this in Berlin, and still more in the "Regierungsrath" of the little town of Gumbinnen. The havoc to be done here was so easy that there was never any lack of will nor ready hands. The people themselves understood nothing. They allowed themselves to be driven like cattle into the pen at the will of their keepers. The close-meshed net of modern Prussian administration was spread over the whole land. No kind of higher instruction, no special schools were allowed to be carried on in Lithuanian, the official language in municipal affairs and the work of the parishes was to be Ger-

man. Officials were often sent there from distant parts of Germany where the name of Lithuania was hardly known, that meant that they were fresh for the fray. It should be understood that it was and is mostly a question of contempt for and utter neglect of the people's own life and language, not a struggle against struggle as in North Sleswick. Compulsory school attendance was introduced, the German language little by little monopolizing the schools. Formerly a feeling of justice caused the earliest instruction for Lithuanian children to be given in Lithuanian, and for the German children in their mother tongue; the schools became a two language school. Lithuanian was taught as a special subject throughout their school life to all the children and some subjects were dealt with in Lithuanian, but this was in the good old time. Ere long the Germanizing progres was accelerated; all subjects except religion were taught in the German tongue and instruction in the Lithuanian language ceased entirely; then, under the Bismarck era, and the notorious Falck, they managed entirely to do away with Lithuanian, even the religious instruction was in German. Certainly a later act provided for religious instruction in the lower and upper classes of every school being given in the language of the majority, whilst the middle classes always had to be taught in German, and the German children to have special instruction when in the minority, but this regulation is hardly of any practical importance. For in the first instance a possible Lithuanian majority is easily cowed and secondly the somewhat indifferent Lithuanian parents did not wish to buy two sets of books, and thirdly the authorities have managed to frustrate the law altogether by appointing teachers in purely Lithuanian villages who did not understand a word of Lithuanian.

"Our German schools shall conquer Lithuania as promptly as our soldiers took Paris" the Germans say with proud confidence. According to the ideas of the German officials seven years at school should be sufficient to alter the nationality of a child. The President of Lithuania or some other big official has expressed this opinion still more plainly: "from the moment a Lithuanian child enters a German school, he or she ceases to be a Lithuanian!"

The only thing left to them was the language of the church, though not unassailed. Still the priest of a Lithuanian district is always required to be able to preach in Lithuanian and at the confirmation of a child the parents have the right to choose whether he or she shall be prepared for the rite in German or Lithuanian. This concession and the use of the mother tongue in the home is all the Germans have granted to the language of the country. True the Lithuanians share constitutional rights with the rest of the inhabi-

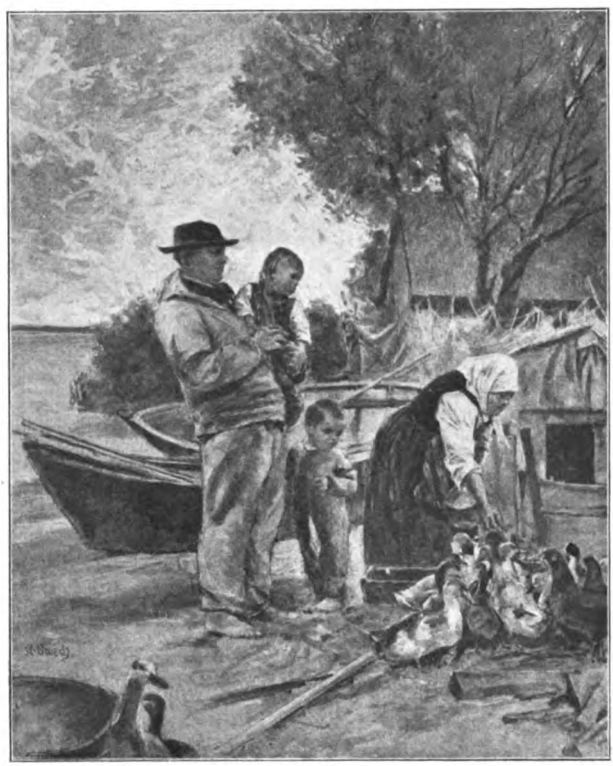
tants of the realm, they elect deputies, are at liberty to publish papers and books and to hold meetings with the permission of the police, but these rights have had no great practical importance, in the first place because they are controlled by the local authorities in a petty manner, and in the second because the rulers themselves have robbed Lithuanian enlightenment of the basis which would give these rights national importance. — In order to defend this unfair treatment of the Lithuanian people, many Germans now assert that the Lithuanians possess no literature, no art and never write anything. These assertions are on a piece with deriding a person for not speaking when it is the derider himself who has gagged him.

That this work of Germanizing has born fruit no one can deny. Every year the Germans have been able to record new conquests, every year the number of Lithuanians is decreasing. The Lithuanian church services have fewer and fewer attendants, and in many parishes they have even been abandoned. The number of candidates for confirmation in Lithuanian decreases for every year. In the environs of the small German towns everything Lithuanian disappears at an ever increasing rate, first the national dress and the peculiar Lithuanian way of living, then all national feeling and the language.

Lithuanian Fisherwomen.

The palm of victory in this warfare must be accorded the German schoolmasters, on whom lay the principal burden of the task. To them came the little boys and girls from the Lithuanian peasant huts, they knew very little or no German, their own language was so different from the German that they would almost have to twist their mouths to pronounce the German words, but they had to pronounce them and they did. The little assembly of children had to repeat in a chorus after the teacher the German name; the teacher probably did not speak Lithuanian and all he could do was to point to a picture and say for instance "Der Vogel". The Lithuanian children always find it difficult to pronounce the f for it does not exist in their language, to begin with the children would pronounce the word incorrectly: "Der Pogel" the teacher repeats "Der Vogel". He could only correct by mechanically repeating the word, no cheerful explanation, no

kind corrections, no little tales, only a dry parrot training, such would be the first school experiences of the Lithuanian children —, or it might be an angry stamp on the floor and a smack from an impatient teacher. This picture applies to by far the greatest number of village schools. There are very, few perhaps half a score of teachers who have really mastered the Lithuanian language in speaking and writing, perhaps even they are of Lithuanian birth, but they have to be careful and control their zeal, for the government is on the watch. An odd teacher may perhaps try to learn Lithuanian, but as he probably never has made any serious effort to learn the language, and for the most only knows it from accidently gathered words and sentences, it is not difficult to imagine what kind of Lithuanian the children hear at school; they soon have to fall back upon the German A. B. C. and arithmetic — and the next year the sing in chorus: "Ich bin ein Preusse, will ein Preusse sein".



The Lithuanian fisherman.

Of course the children are often at sea with regard to the German language. To translate: "Er las leise" into "he counted lice", is a more comical than rare example from the teaching in the national schools of Lithuania, when it sometimes strikes a teacher to ask a child in its own language: "what was the meaning of what you read?" That the der, du, das, causes the Lithuanian children as much trouble as it did Mark Twain will be readily understood. On the other hand it must be confessed that many children learn to express themselves in German surprisingly quickly, and they

understand nearly everything. The East-Prussian administration has invented an excellent method for keeping the schoolmasters up to the mark; an annual gratuity is paid to those teachers who have specially distinguished themselves by "Förderung der deutchen Sprache". It is a question of entirely doing away with the teaching in Lithuanian, of being able to report nothing but German candidates for Confirmation or as many as possible, and of being able to show good results from the annual examination in German. This however is a temptation for the keenest "Streber" to exceed their authorithy, as for instance when the teacher in a Lithuanian village punished two boys for speaking Lithuanian outside schoolhours. In Schoolhours however it can be insisted upon that the children answer in German even if they are only able to say yes or no. It goes without saying that it would often be of no avail to request such teachers to comply with the law in regard to instruction in the Lithuanian language. Nor do the Lithnanians themselves demand this, for most of them have already lost their faith in their national rights, and many of them do all they can to have their children Germanized. Even when the parents speak Lithuanian together, ihey exert themselves to speak to their children in the language they have learnt from their German neighbours. They may still be able to master Lithuanian thoroughly, whilst their Low German vocabulary is of a kind that might appropriately be labeled: "Ik well et, Ik well drink", but all the same they speak this language, or in some cases High German, to their own children, often of their own free will, often because the schoolmasters wish it — these schoolmasters have indeed a fair amount of power. "What is the good of our language", the Lithuanians say, "our children cannot get on xith that anywhere, none of the people who have money and are fine know our language, and they all despise it; it is much better to have done with it." If a Lithuanian has the least ambition, and wants to go out into the world to make money or try his fortune in other ways, what chance will he have without knowing German; he cannot acquire knowledge, cannot obtain a situation without knowing German; only the dullest and poorest still keep to Lithuanian, and these "dummen Lithauer" as the Germans call them, have often lost the best side of their national character. They became suspicious, mean and avaricious, and are no longer hospitable as of old; they have learnt too well that money is everything. Their poverty and apathy often cause them to be dirty and slovenly, in striking contrast to the neatness of the Germans. It is easy enough to understand that to be a Lithuanian in the end means being a subject for contempt. If Lithuanian parents uuderstand but at little German they prefer to

have their children confirmed in the German language especially if they are pretty well to do, for socially it is certainly considered finer. — A warm friend of this little people once saw a sad proof of the undesirable effect upon the Lithuanians themselves of this contempt for things Lithuanian. He was sitting on a steamer in Courland Bay, and opposite him were three young fellows drinking beer and talking loudly in German. They looked like well dressed artisans. An old woman sat a little distance off, she looked downcast and moody; now and then she looked in the direction of the three young fellows and shook her head. At last the stranger went up to her and in a friendly way asked her in Lithuanian — he could see from her head gear that she was Lithuanian — why she was so depressed. "My good sir, I am so sad about my son, that nice looking fellow who sits there with his friends. He has been away from home for four years, and I had so looked forward to seeing him again, but now he is ashamed of his mother, because I am a poor Lithauen woman and cannot speak German, and I have not the heart to go up to him, for I don't want his friends to laugh at him!" The stranger however took care that this ungrateful son was made to acknowledge his mother before his friends and the other passengers. He asked him whether he had forgotten the fourth commandment together with his mother tongue. — The young man had come home after serving his time as a soldier, another of the excellent Germanizing methods; the local administration has a way of sending Lithuanian recruits to regiments in purely German districts.

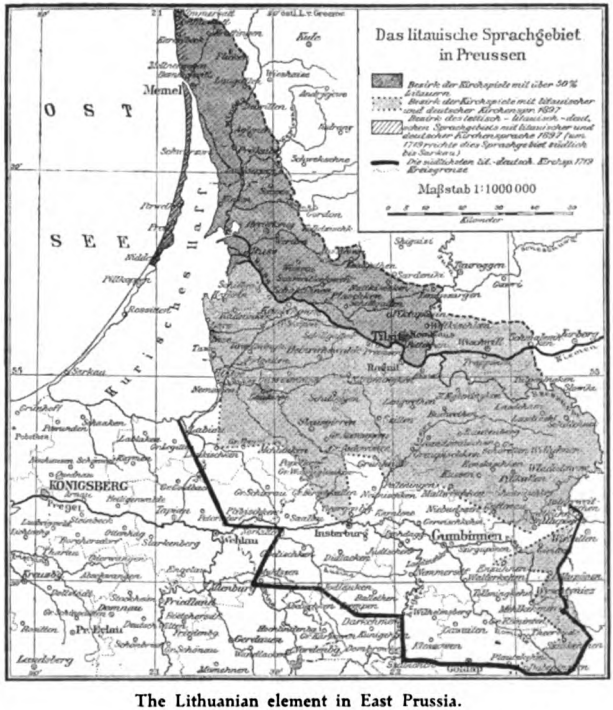
It is thus the undermining process goes on. Untis the present time tradition was the only stay against this process, this thenacious clinging to the place of one's birth and earlier life, and the strange intense religious feeling of the Lithuanian people. The more strange and new the surrounding life became, the more the Lithuanian felt themselves to be a little and impotent people, and the more ferventley they turned to religion in a pietistic, half mystic manner. The Prussian Lithuanians are Lutherans, but they have never been able quite to drive Catholicism out of their minds. They like to kneel in the churches, and prefer endless chanting and prayers. As they noticed how the pastors more and more becamed Germanized, how the Lithuanian sermons became more and more dry and a mere labour of duty many of them withdrew from a closer intercourse with the church, and they held their own service, their "susirinkimai", noisy meetings of confession lasting for nights. At theese meetings the travelling "holy one", žodžiosakytojis, always delivers his address in Lithanian; he speaks of heaven and hell, of the godlessness of the pastors, and the wickedness of the times in wild

glowing terms. When they are inspired, men and women, young and old, stand up, speak, sing and pray. It is only during these hours of the night that the Lithuanians of these districts revive, instinctively still feeling their own power and gifts, when the sun has extinguished its light for their mighty rulers, and the German windows are dark and empty, whilst the lights blaze at "surinkimininkai".

But too soon comes the grey sober morning when the whistle of the factory and the farm bell call the men to work, and they again become the cowed Lithuanians.

Germanizing has been going on as such a pace, that it would not be diffi= cult to calculate when the last of the Li= thuanians in Prussia had disappeared; a hundred years at the outside and the dy= ing strains of the Lithuanian language would be heard.

No wonder that people have thought that the days of the Lithuanian people were numbered; the simplest statistics would bear out this supposition, in view of the rapid decline of the people.



The Lithuanian element in East Prussia.

The census of former times have not been accurate, but they have probably not erred in the matter of overstating the number of Lithuanians. Accor= ding to a somewhat superficial census there lived in Prussia in the year 1831 about 125.000 Lithuanians. At that time there was no violent Germanizing going on. As a matter of fact the Germans at that time had not really in= vaded the frontier land of East Prussia; in the year 1848 their number ex=

ceeded 150,000. From that time however the figures decline; thirty years later, in 1878, there were only 131,415 Lithuanians in all the 13 dioceses into which Lithuania is divided; there were several parishes in which the Lithuanianians had been in the majority at the last census, but which had now become entirely German; the number of Lithuanians in one parish was reduced from 360 to 10, in another from 500 to 52! At the census af 1890, twelve years later the decline in the number of Lithuanians was still more pronounced. The aggregate figure was then 121,265, and on that occasion every one speaking Lithuanian was included, whilst the census of 1878 only referrred to the Lutheran communities, the Roman Catholics being left out. Of the above 121,265, 6351 stated that they "belonged to two nationalities", both German and Lithuanian. The German statistics may safely deduct the latter, so these Germanizing efforts are only centred upon about 115,000 persons. In twelwe years this means a decline of 18,000 persons, if the number of Roman Catholics is put at 2000 which is hardly excessive. — Six times 12 years and the Lithuanians on German soil will only belong to history and the realm of science; and even a hundred years may be looked upon as a liberal figure, for why should not Germanizing go on at an increasing pace as it has done in the past.

These 18,000 persons consequently have been absorbed in the German people, at any rate nearly all, for of any decrease from natural causes there can hardly be any question, emigration is altogether insignificiant. No, the Germans may safely claim thar their "Deutschtum" has won over these souls. The Germans rejoice at this, and consider that they have every right to do so. The advocates of the Germanizing system argue in this way: "Such a small, not to say ridiculously small people as the Lithuanians, a people who have lost all historical tradition, and in part their claim to life, and who in reality do not possesss any real assets on which to found an independant existence, such a people must be delighted at the happiness of being absorbed in the great German Kultur nation, and we ought to make the operation as expeditious as possible, put aside all petty considerations in order to pave the way for a rapid absorption. It is an advantage to us Germans to have a clean frontier, and the Lithuanians gain an incalculable advantage. We simply make them a present of all the rich Kultur and development which the German people have acquired through centuries of fighting and suffering. All the Lithuanians have to do is to send their children to our schools and to our regiments".

There may be something insinuating in this mode of reasoning, and it cannot be denied that the Germans have brought "Kultur" to Lithuania.

When one sees the well-tilled acres, the smoking factories, the well kept forests, and the roads as straight as a die, with their avenues of trees, when one drives through the clean streets of the neat little towns, past well built churches and houses one is forced to respect these able rulers, especially if one happens to come from the Russian side of the frontier. It is Kultur which has conquered Lithuania, and these German colonists of East Prussia are by no means a bad sort of people; they have often the freshness and energy of settlers, their hospitality, and the Low German straightforward friendliness of mind. It is Kultur which rules in the official bureaus of Lithuania, Kultur which rules in the homes of the pastors and schoolmasters. But all this has one serious drawback to everyone not a German, it is German Kultur. This is something which the big nations of the earth do not understand, least of all the Germans — that what is good and to the purpose for themselves, need not be so, is not so in fact for all others. It is no use denying it, one has to be a German in order to rejoice in, and have the full benefit of German Kultur. The valuable gift which the Germans so generously wish to present to the Lithuanians the latter really cannot make use of, their log houses are simply not big enough. In other words the great majority of the Lilhuanians cannot be transformed into German „Kulturmenschen" in the course of a few years at school. If the Germans really succeed in Germanizing them, the Lithuanians in nine cases out of ten will only become apish imitators, all surface, shallow and hollow.

This little people which the Germans have got under their sway, are a slightly developed but fairly sound peasant race. The Germans have suddenly seen fit to despise the harmonious development of the Lithuanians; these German pedagogues and statesmen who otherwise are so busy about keeping progress within conservative bounds, have here committed a regular coup d'état, they have torn these children mentally out of their homes, have deprived them of their only possession, their independence, and planted them in the big restless German "Kulturgarten". These children have nothing to lean upon, have no hold on their homes, as have the North Sleswick or Polish children, they have to take their chance as best they can. Only very few are mentally strong enough for a sound development, in most of them an unprepossesing shallowness and lack of personality is the outcome. Without a mother tongue, without any mental craving, they struggle on through life more or less successfully.

Life too has shown what harm to the soul the Germanizing process has wrought in Lithuania. The moral level of the people has been lowered, and not so very little either. The German law officials often complain about the

ruffianism and the mental stupidity of the Lithuanian peasantry; most of these officials certainly maintain that the Lithuanians themselves are no good, and find in this an additional reason for accelerating the Germanizing process, but it is interesting to note in this connection that earlier descriptions of the people all present a very different picture. German and other foreign writers are loud in their praises of the pure morals and genial character of this little peasant people, and even now German pastors and laymen have emphatically voiced the opinion that the Lithuanians have been harmed spiritually by the suddenness with which German rule has been enforced, and where Lithuanians are living fairly unaffected by foreign influence, they are fully on a levei with the German population morally.

If one is not to denounce the methods applied to the Lithuanians by their masters as rough brutality, and I should be loath to do so considering the masters in question are the great German nation, these methods must in any case be described as the outcome of an incomprehensible lack of understanding. How in the world could it have harmed the Germans to grant these children free development on their own soil, allow this people of peasants to lead their little life according to their own traditions, aye, help them to brighter conditions of life so that some day they might form a capable independent frontier population who in union with the Lithuanians east of the frontier would afford Germany a natural and excellent barrier against Russia. But the Germans *will* not listen to this, *will* not admit that they harm this people, and should one once in a while manage to make them admit it, they say with a shrug: "Nun wohl, lass denn sein! the people will have to sacrifice a generation or two but that is a matter of very slight importance when the whole future of the people is considered!" Fancy, that Germans can show such a lack of feeling. "What the Lithuanians possess of national assets", the Germans add, "their former language, customs and traditions, we will preserve them all, nothing shall be lost, so no scientist or poet need cry on that account. We shall preserve them ten times better than if they were allowed to remain in the keeping of these dull peasant people."

It must be admitted that linguistic science owes to the Germans the greater part of that rich material which the Lithuanians have yielded towards the solution of obscure questions. It is the Germans who first unearthed the wonderful language of Lithuania. Men like Schleicher, Nesselman, Brugman, Leskien, and Bezzenberger, far famed linguists and ethnologists, have worked indefatigably to collect material from Lithuania. The Litthauische litterärische Gesellschaft" under the leadership of Bezzenberger confine their labours entirely to gather in material from the Lithuanian field "whilst there

is yet time" as the programme states. Nothing is considered too trifling, fairy tales, riddless, proverbs, customs, and folksongs with their melodies are collected and recorded, from every corner and in all the different dialects. All kinds of old household gods, peculiar garments, every interesting trifle so long as it is genuine, are collected and purchased without any petty haggling about the price.

This work is being hurried on, as if to enable its promoters to cry out to those who want to cleanse the frontier, the Germanizers:

"All clear, sweep away!"

This is "Kultur".

But how is this to be explained? Slowly, half imperceptibly, yet by degrees becoming more evident, a resistance against this Germanizing process has sprung into existence, the Lithuanian movement. No one can any longer deny that it exists.

It is no individual man of the people who has brought this movement forward. Many factors probably have co-operated, first and foremost the violent ruthless Germanizing — it is the reaction which never quite fails to follow. Had the Germans allowed matters to go on as they did before the coercive measures came into operation, the movement would probably never have come to life. In spite of national sluggishness, in spite of their self abandonment, this persecution of and contempt for all things Lithuanian, has all the same aroused bitterness and wrath in quarters where the great majority are still Lithuanian; and there are such places in Prussia, in the neighbourhood of Heydekrug and Memel, in the islands in the delta of the Niemen and in a few inviolate villages further south in the country. The people grew sick and weary of the pastors who maltreated their mother tongue in the pulpit; they were angry with the schoolmasters who could not speak to the children, there were even villages which actually took steps to complain about religion being taught in German contrary to the wishes of the parents; but these complaints of course were of no avail. The present writer himself witnessed an example of the indifference and contempt with which the local authorities treated such complaints. A small village made a complaint because the teacher did not know Lithuanian, which was perfectly true, he could not say a coherent sentence. In answer to this complaint they were told that the teacher in question knew enough. This kind of thing causes ill feeling.

By degrees so many Germans made their way into Lithuania that the

Lithuanians discovered that there were also stupid and evil people to be found amongst the Germans, which had a detrimental effect upon the former's respect for the latter. The Lithuanians also discovered that knowing German was not sufficiant to ensure one's fortune, for many a lad and many a maiden had to return to the humbler conditions of their parental village. More and more was heard of the sister people on the other side of the frontier, a livelier conmunication sprang up between the Lithuanians on either side, it dawned upon them that there were many Lithuanians outside Prussia, and this strengthened their selfconfidence. It would however be very unfair to forget those Germans in Lithuania who honestly worked for the benefit of this suppressed end despised people. There are not so very few national Germans who in their capacity of pastors and teachers in the Lithuanian peasant country have grown fond of the people and each within his little circle worked for them. They have discovered and admired the noble soul which this humble people possess where the are left in peace, and several Germans have boldly spoken out against the havoc and demolition wrought upon a sound and original people. — Men like Gisevius who in the end almost became one with his beloved Lithuanians, Pastor Jacoby in Memel, Glogau who has given us a splendid description of Lithuania, Voelkel and several others have done theirs to keep up the courage in many a Lithuanian heart. In the depths of these Lithuanian hearts another cause may be found for this movement of awakening: disgust with the onesidedness and the shallowness of the German instruction in the schools.

Few of them probably are fully conscious of this, but if they happen to come across something which they fully understand because it enters their hearts through the medium of their mother tongue, they develope a love for this something, and at times the thought may strike them that the reason of their being of less account and poorer, and less clever than the Germans perhaps may be found in the fact that they always have to approach them in German garb. The Germans should only try to speak Lithuanian, and they would get their deserts. They feel that the German language involuntarily forces them into a humble and unfree position, this German language which has often been stamped into them. Those unfortunates amongst the Lithuanian people who can speak neither German nor Lithuanian in a decent way, and who yet have a craving for something beyond the daily bread, are dissatisfied and easily gained over for the mother tongue.

From amongst all these different people, men have arisen who clearly saw that the humiliation of their countrymen lay underneath in the Germanizing

process. The people were happier and more prosperous before this was forced upon them. Supposing they made a stand now and stuck to their own language! Supposing they showed resistance, perhaps this would procure for them more respect, and once again endow the people with selfesteem.

In the midst of this growing ferment a remarkable man arrived in Lithuania, the Hanoverian philologist Dr. Georg Sauerwein, a genius within his domain, whose marvellous faculty for languages knows no limit. He knows almost all European languages and several non-European to boot, his knowledge is not the glib superficiality of a clever commercial traveller, nor on the other hand that of a pronounced scientific linguist, but he knows languages as if in each case he was transformed into a child of the language in question. He learns a new language in an incredibly short time, and in such a way that his ear rivals that of a native, if he sets his mind upon mastering it. In addition Dr. Sauerwein is a poet, and a man of deep and noble feeling. He has written poems in at least thirty different languages, sometimes a little broad and heavy perhaps, but never banal or inferior. He has devoted his whole life to battle for the rights of surpressed nations, an enthusiastic Christian faith being his main incentive. He says: "He who is without a language is a heathen, and if he through violence loses his mother tongue, he loses his childhood's faith, therefore the violater commits a sin against the Holy Ghost, and every honest Christian ought to prevent this." He came to Lithuania from a "mission" amongst the Lausitz Serbians, the small Sclavic residue at Spreewald near Berlin, his work there had born rich fruit, and his poems in the Lausitz language are amongst the most beautiful of their modest literature.

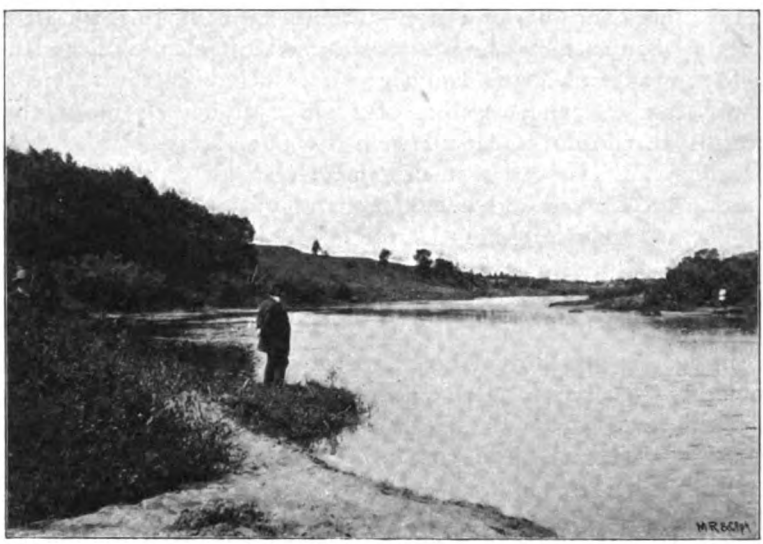
In Lithuania he fell in love with the great simplicity to be found in their folk songs, and with the fervent Christian faith he thought was to be found, where the people had not been levelled down by the Germanizing process.

Dr. Sauerwein soon learnt Lithuanian well enough to write a purer and more copious Lithuanian than many a native, and he spoke it fluently. He began to speak and write for the peasantry; be besought them for the sake of their honour and their faith to hold fast to their mothertongue; he told them how highly the Lithuanian language was treasured by scientists, whilst the good Lithuanians themselves often looked down upon it. He told them of other peoples who had lost power and esteem, but regained it by their own labour. The learned German Doctor's encouragement and heartfelt words, were not altogether lost upon his listeners. A crowd of young people, mostly women, gathered round him eagerly listening whenever he spoke. He helped to found a society, "Biruté" in Tilsit. The sad history of this society

forms one of the dark spots in the youthful struggle, the society is supposed to have been betrayed by its own members, but it still lives and labours.

At times Dr. Sauerwein adopted more practical methods; in order to get a message from the suppressed people conveyed direct to the throne, he encouraged the Lithuanians to send a deputation to Berlin.

The local officials opposed this by all the means in their power, they coaxed and threatened, and made fun of those who intended to join, but in spite of everything the Lithuanian deputation set out for Berlin. A malicious



Dr. Sauerwein.

fate however spoiled nearly all the good that might have come from it. It is significant of the Lithuanian subserviance to the Germans, that the leaders of the deputation did not dare to refuse to take with them the daughter of a German pastor, who could not resist such a convenient chance of having his pretty little daugter presented at Court. Attired in the handsome Lithuanian dress they were well received at headquarters. The old Emperor who was then living was much interested in seeing these strange subjects of his and hearing their folksongs. Crown Prince Frederick knew a little Lithuanian, and the tale goes that he promised the good people that his son should learn their language properly. I doubt whether he kept his promise, at any rate nothing has been heard of William II knowing Lithuanian. In

the evening there was a ball in honour of Lithuanians; the Crown Prince spoke a little to each of the older members of the deputation and asked in his best Lithuanian the pastor's little daughter for a dance. She did not understand him. The Crown Prince thinking he had not expressed himself correctly repeated his request in a different way. But the pastor's little daughter did not know Lithuanian at all, which she had to confess the Crown Prince in German. "I hope you will have learnt Lithuanian by the next time we meet" said the Crown Prince severely. The German papers made the most of this incident; they denounced the deputation as a masquerade, told their readers that the Lithuanians were delighted at being Germanized, that they would soon be unable to understand their own language and it was only agitators who maintained the contrary.

It was assuredly a great misfortune for the German Lithuanians, as for many others, that the Emperor Frederick passed away at the very outset of his reign.

Dr. Sauerwein has several times arranged great national fêtes in Lithuania, on these occasions he has gathered together and brought to light, everything that could still be found of genuine old Lithuanian. Men and women old and young had to don the national dress wherever it was possible; Lithuanian songs were sung, and big Lithuanian words were uttered, and Dr. Sauerwein was the soul of it all. — He has given to the Lithuanians a series of poems, but only a few of them have found general favour; they are too heavy and too grand for the tastes of an undeveloped people. His Hymn to Lithuania is the best known; he had hoped it might become the Lithuanian national anthem, but it has not been generally adopted. The following three verses are from this hymn:

Lithuania for ever,
Held in heavy chains or free!
Let my fervent soul thee follow
Undismayed in times of trouble!
Proudly I thy name will publish,
Be thy freedom's faithful warrior.
Though the whole world should denounce me,
Ne'er could they those riches squander.
Held in heavy chains or free
Lithuania for ever!

Lithuania for ever!
Land on Niemen's sandy shore!
Verdant forests softly gather
Moisture from the verdant meadows.
Breezes kiss the grove of birches,
Sigh amongst the fir tree's branches,
From the heaven's mighty darkness
Countless stars are brightly sparkling.
Land on Niemen's sandy shore!
Lithuania for ever!

Lithuania for ever
Send in love thy mother tongue!
Should against thee envy flourish,
Should thy hope and courage fail thee
Lift thine eyes unto the Highest,
God above will look upon thee,
Will restore thy former power,
Teach thee how thy chains to carry
Guard thy faith and mother tongue!
Lithuania for ever.

Later on Dr. Sauerwein aroused hostility amongst the Lithuanians themselves, amongst those whom he had stirred up to labour for the Lithuanian cause. They soon began to view with doubt and scepticism this German's half religious half poetical efforts to bring about a new golden age, to raise a "people of nature" in the midst of hardfisted, practical business people, and factory chimneys. They said they had more than enough of songs and poems, what they wanted was political and economic liberation. Other men took up these tasks, but Dr. Sauerwein may take to himself the credit of having more than any other man helped the German Lithuanians to obtain a more adequate estimate of their own worth.

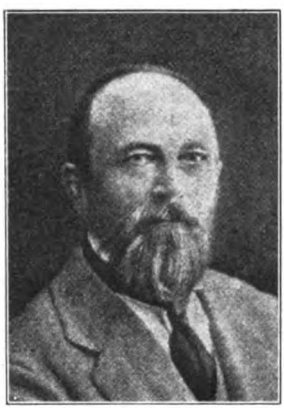
It is interesting to see how this feeling of love for their own, this feeling of awakening self-esteem manifests itself in people so Germanized that they did not even know a word of Lithuanian. From having been considered low and contemptible it was now thought an honour and original to be of old Lithuanian blood, princely blood to boot, one must remember there have been many princes in Lithuania. It also flattered the good Lithuanians to see a little band of philologists and other scientists visiting their country year by year, studying everything with much care and zeal, going from the one lowly peasant cottage to the other, and talking friendly with the dwel-

lers in their best possible Lithuanian, this encites them to bring forth all they possess of what is best and most peculiar to Lithuania.

How eager they were to sing their songs to me, and with what intense pleasure they listened to my stumbling Lithuanian when I reminded them of what the mother tongue and national feeling might mean. They certainly often shook their heads when they mentally compared the reality with the picture I tried to conjure forth, but I could see that all the same their self-esteem rose. Even amongst cultivated Germans of Lithuanian extraction, one could hear utterances which some years back would have been impossible. Once in Prussia I heard a greybearded forest inspector who could not speak Lithuanian, but who bore a distinctly Lithuanian name make the following confession: "Alas, I cannot myself speak the language of my forefathers, but my children shall learn it, so much is certain".

The Lithuanian movement in Prussia has of late assumed more natural forms. The old Lithuanian newspapers which were only used as a medium of propaganda for Prussian administration, and which faithfullv taught the Lithuanians that German rule was a gift from heaven, and that it was the duty of every good Lithuanian to give his vote to German conservatives of the Reichstag, have been obliged somewhat to alter their tone. The leading men amongst the Lithuanians themselves have now put their shoulder to the wheel; the pioneers of these hundred thousands of suppressed and humble people are strange and interesting men. The most prominent of these national champions socially is the far-famed Dr. Bruožis of Tilsit, one of those awkwardly ingenious persons who whatever step they take, whether wrong or right, seem bound to make enemies. He is a wealthy man, and has a considerable practice, and has found out a remarkable treatment for phthisis, which is considered infallible throughout the whole of East Prussia, but which he keeps secret to the natural indignation of his colleagues. — "It is mv only weapon against my enemies, if I give it up I am done for", is his defence. He has read much and is a good linguist, and besides his profession, busies himself with almost everything. But first and last he is a fervent Lithuanian. In his naive learning he has found out that his people are the oldest people of Europe, if not of the earth, that Prussian Lithuania is the original home of all Indo-European peoples, and that his language is the common mother of all their tongues. This gospel he preaches with convincing warmth to the laymen, and more particularly to the Lithuanian peasants. Of late years he has been obliged to discontinue his propaganda as he has been officially declared as incapable of managing his affairs, and it has been intimated to him that if he did not desist from inciting "die

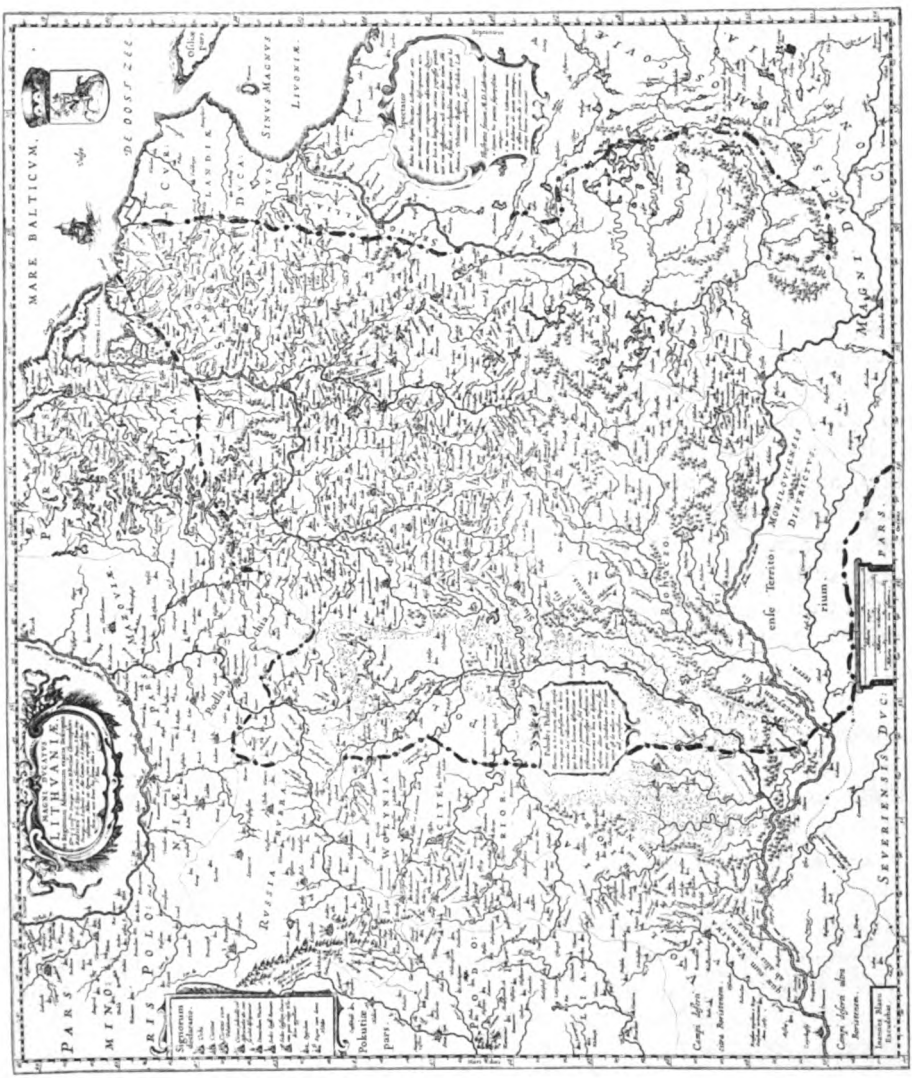
dummen Lithauer" it would be necessary to lock him up. The Germans have altogether threated this man very harshly; charges affecting his honour have been brought aginst him, he has been accused of crimes which it was impossible to prove, the authorities have refused to let him take proceedings for his defence, and finally done for him by declaring him incapable of managing his affairs. Of course his anti-German sentiments have been the main reason for this bitter persecution. Another striking figure is the Lithuanian Jankus, politican, and publisher of newspapers; he is of humble extraction, but under this national movement he has become a person of importance. Contrarv to Dr. Sauerwein he has endeavoured to rouse the people by means of anti-clerical half-socialistic agitation; he has written much for the enlightment of the people, he has wandered through Lithuania from village to village to stir up his countrymen, and he has been one of the chief promoters of the Lithuanian political society in Eastern Prussia, which has already played a part at all recent elections. The German authorities for various reasons have kept a strict eye upon him, more especially because he was suspected of distributing Lithuanian books beyond the frontier amongst the Russian Lithuanians, and Prussia does not want to have any trouble with her neighbour about such matters. Jankus is now living with his excellent wife, a staunch Lithuanian, in an idyllic village on the shores of the Niemen; there he prints books and newspapers and many strange things emanate from that peasant house and are spread far and wide. It is however necessary for him to observe the greatest caution lest the government some fine day should see fit to put a stop to the labours of this rustic diffuser of wisdom.



Jankus.

The first political representatives have come from the Lithuanian farmers in the marshlands of the Niemen. The time is now past when Lithuanian electors were put down as sure supporters of the German Conservative candidate. "A Lithuanian" was as near as anything returned at the last election to the Reichstag, and in the year 1893 "a Lithuanian" was actually elected, for the first time, albeit only to the Prussian Second Chamber; it was a farmer, Tamošius by name.

It was an event in the German Empire though perhaps only a small one, that a people hitherto entirely overlooked suddenly sent a man, a man to

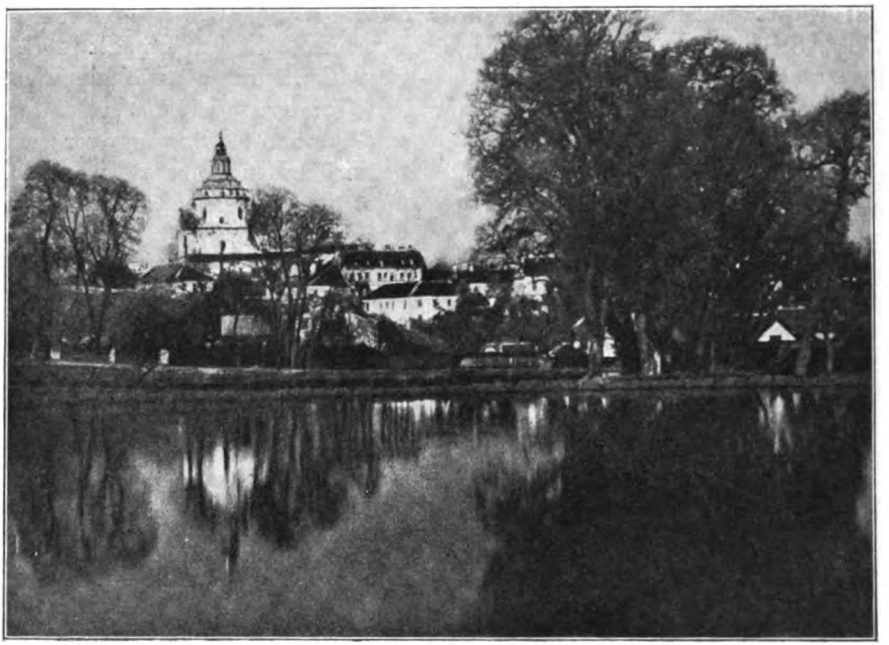

MARE BALTICVM.
SINVS MAGNVS LIVONIÆ.
LITHVANIÆ
RVSSIA
Pokutiæ pars.
Signorum Solarium.
Campi Asseri cum Rovitenum.
Campi Asseri ultra Rovitenum.
Inventio Maris Excelsior.
SEVERIENSIS DVC. PARS.
MAGNI DVCIS
MOMILOVIENSIS DISTRICTVS.
ense Territorium.

protest to the Legislature, in order to announce to the world at large that his people, like others, would not allow themselves to be strangled without raising a cry. The German press outside Eastern Prussia did not seem to notice this, although it was certainly deserving of mention. The Lithuanians, however, did not return the man whom the best amongst them wished for. The Germans abandoned their own candidate, and helped a Lithuanian section to elect Tamošius, in order to avoid Smalakys being returned, a much more dangerous man, and whom the majority of the Lithuanians wished to elect, and also would have elected had it not been for German manœuvring. Smalakys is at present the only man in Prussian Lithuania who with power could plead the cause of his countrymen in Berlin. He is a man of fifty but strong and sound as a bear, of old Lithuanian blood, his name signifies „tar-eye". His bringing up was plain, but he is a man who has used his time well; for three years he has wandered on foot through the most of Europe, from Sweden and Denmark to Spain and Turkey. Until a few years ago he used the German language, and in his heart he had bid good-by to a Lithuanian renaissance of his people. Like most of the farmers of the delta he certainly spoke Lithuanian, but it was Dr. Sauerwein who aroused him, and he became a Lithuanian, body and soul. The transformation was so complete that when his son returned from the University four years after, he was almost a stranger in his old home. It had in the meantime become Lithuanianized, a language which he did not know and which he looked upon with the usual German contempt, whilst his younger brothers and sisters and his father and mother spoke it amongst themselves. — I have mentioned this because it proves that national feeling can awaken in spite of years, and in spite of language; it is a proof of the question of nationality not being one of language alone.

It is very difficult to prophecy anything as to the trend of future developements in Prussian Lithuania. It is possibly that this section of the people may claim a life for themselves on their own ground and they may even win over many who are apparantly lost to the cause but it cannot be denied, that there is a greater probability of this flicker being but a transitory awakening before the sleep of death. The resources of Germanization are so overwhelming, and it has already taken such firm root, that the weeding process seems almost hopeless. There is a lack of suitable and sufficiently strong men, and there is not much chance of finding suitable elements amongst the younger generation. There may be many who are discontented enough to be willing to follow, but none clearheaded enough to lead. In addition these Lithuanians should not overlook the fact, that the resistance on the

part of their rulers will increase, and that force will be used without mercy within the limits of the law, should the government think it expedient. The government in Berlin is not likely to view with favour a national movement springing up right against the Russian frontier, and in Berlin, so far, they have been more given to applying coercion, than to winning over their opponents, but experience may have taught the Germans to act more wisely.

The best and the most thoughtful amongst the Lithuanians in Prussia, are rather beginning to look eastward in order to see what is going on amongst the Lithuanians under the Russian rule, for there, too, are symptoms of a national awakening. The moral help must come from that side, if the Lithuanians in Prussia are to have any hope in the future. It is the bulk of the people and its kernel — — too who live on Russian soil. — —



Vilna (Vilnius).

PART VII.

RUSSIAN LITHUANIA.

If anyone wishes to point to the spot on the map of Europe where struggles and misery during the last generations have caused the bitterest tears to flow and spent the most precious blood, he would not be wrong in placing his finger on the land around Vilna and Kovno, Russian Lithuania. It is here the fight has been raging, man against man, between Russia and Poland, first war with armies and soldiers, cannons and battles and afterwards, when the whole defence of Poland only consisted in the strength and resistance of individuals, war between the desperate rebels and the armies of their wrathful rulers, a bloody game of "brigand and soldier" through the forests behind each hedge, and in the endless bogs.

It was here Muravief, the trusted agent of the Czar, suppressed and punished so that the gallows were never empty month after month. It was here he drove about in his iron coach, pronouncing the death sentence on whole villages, coupling human beings old and young and sending them to Siberia on foot, letting them see as a farewell the red flames which devastated their homes.

Vilna.

And how these people have suffered! How many strong wills have not been crushed, how many hopes have not been blighted, what costly sacrifices have not been made! There is hardly a single farm of any importance in the whole country which has not been molested and devastated in that stormy period. Lithuania has been the fortress of the Polish nation and it has been defended as long as there was an arm to hold a weapon.

But if the Lithuania of the Poles is the great home of fighting and doughty deeds, there is a Lithuania behind this, a Lithuania which meant to breathe and labour even if every estate and every Polish Szlachta-nest disappeared.

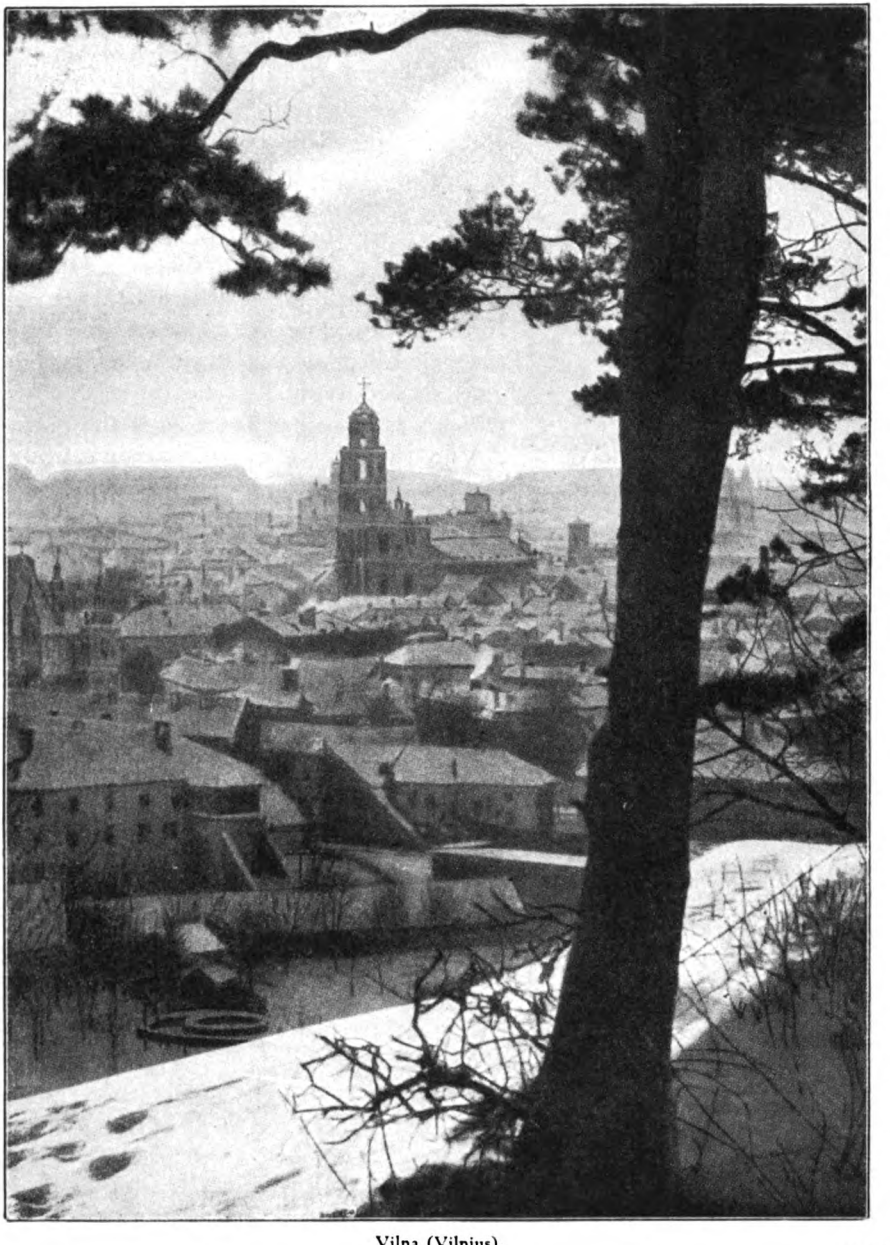
The Cathedral.

It is that Lithuania which during the last few centuries has left no record of power and fight, but only a memory of serfdom and submission, and it is the country's own children, the Lithuanians themselves, who store these memories. They have had to pay dearly for a war they did not declare, and from the victorious outcome of which they could reap nothing, for it was not their victory.

But there is yet another Lithuania, although "another Lithuania" is rather an inadequate word; there is another people in Lithuania who only live

The Jews.

there on sufferance, and because they have no other place to turn to. I refer to the Jews of Lithuania. Neither by soul nor by body do they belong to Lithuania — but all the same they dwell here, live, slave, and die here, for they must walk the earth, and kinship, employment or poverty chain them to the place where they first saw the light. They live hundreds or thousands huddled together in small miserable wooden townlets all over the country. They let the great haggle and fight for power, laugh equally at the victor and the vanquished, only strive to carry on their wretched existence under changing conditions, bowed down in foul weather, slowly straightening their backs in fine. They are indiarubber or stone on the surface, but inwardly they are human beings, living souls more free perhaps than their oppres-



Vilna (Vilnius).

Kosciuszko.

sors, they have no political ideas nor parties for whom they have to cringe — they have only their God and their loved ones.

This country and these peoples are now ruled by the Russians not exactly by the Russian people, not by a long way in fact, but by Russian Government offices, with their helpers, the police, the gendarmes, and the Cossacks. Nor was it likely that the few thousand Polish noblemen could reign here forever, they were but pioneers, and when the main force was done for, the defiant ones were shot individually, and the new power which was more hardfisted took the reins.

Vilna illustrates to this very day in a striking manner this fourfold divided country. In the old castle where in former times the Grand Dukes of Lithuania reigned, the Russian central administration, the Governor General of the whole Lithuanian land now hold his sway. On all the clumsy yellow stucco buildings, on barracks on the main post-office, on the police stations and on the colleges of the town, shines the black-gilded spread-eagle, the Muscovite coat-of-arms. Russian police and gendarmes patrol the streets, every sign board and every placard are in Russian, every street bears a

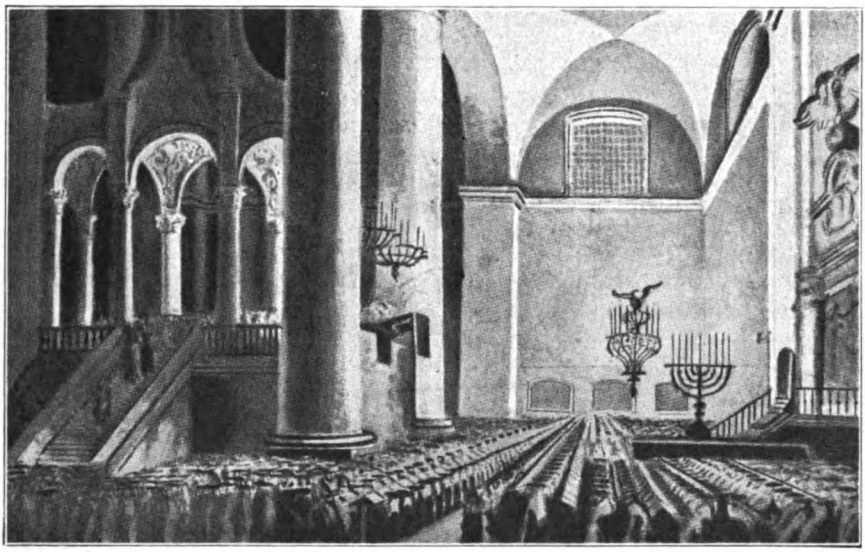
The Holy Mother.

Russian name, everything Polish has been carefully scraped off. But if one looks beyond the uniform in the upper classes it is not difficult to discover that they are not all Russians.

Praying.

There was a time when it was prohibited, simply prohibited to speak Polish in Vilna; now it is permitted, except at all gatherings, and in fact much Polish is spoken. All these grave straight men and the women with the bright eyes are Polish; they possess that "wdzięk" (charm and grace) which does not belong to the Russian women. Polish is the language of the drawing rooms in the town, over the sofa may be seen the portrait of the Polish poet-king Adam Mickiewicz, in the bookcase are to be found all the great names in Polish literature, and in marble or plaster Kossciuszko looks down from his appointed place. In almost every house one could find the same symbols of sentiment and hope.

It was the fortress of the Polish spirit in the East, now it had been level-



Old Synagoge in Vilna.

"The pointed gate".

ed with the ground, but the Poles still cling to the place hoping for the renewal of former days.

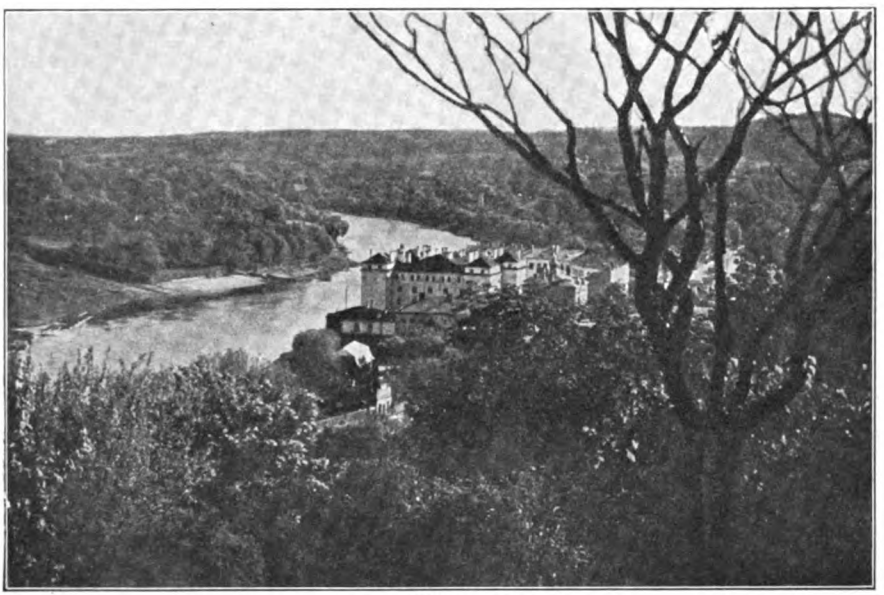
And holiest of the holy the image of God's own Mother shines from her exalted station over "the pointed gate" in Vilna. This wonderworking image is the pride and the comfort of Vilna and all its Roman Catholic people. Surrounded by a halo of burning wax candless, this exquisite image from its rich frame looks down upon countless devotees. Whenever one passes the narrow street which ends in "the pointed gate" above which the chapel of the image has been built, one sees cripples, and beggars on their knees praying and making the sign of the cross, and everyone must uncover thei head when passing through this holy place.

But the busy crowd in Vilna who trade and throng the streets, who hurry and slave are the Jews, for Vilna more than anything is the town of the Jews. One meets them at once at the railway station, as servants from small dirty hotels, as flat-catchers to pounce upon the unway; they act as cab-drivers, and nearly all the street urchins seem to be Jewish. Here one sees the unadulterated type of the Polish Jew, from the boy with his half keen half impudent expression, and the girl with the much too bic nose, the sparkling eyes, and the challenging mouth, to the stooping toiler, whose appearance seems but to indicate the one thing: "Geschäft machen"! irrespective of his being a porter, a driver or a hawker; and winds up with the grand old man of which no

The Jew quarter.

people in the world can boast a finer and more handsome type than can the Jews, the patriarchal old man with his flowing white hair and beard, his gentle serious eyes and his serene gait. It is strange that these nervous hawkers can end thus. It is a living repudiation of the ugly verdict pronounced by the enemies of the Jews that the souls of the Jews have been transformed into grasping hands.

The fourth people in Vilna the Lithuanians themselves are only met with as the peasant en route, as the vadmal garbed silent one at the market, and



Vilna.

not often even there, for the White Russian peasants have made their way right unto Vilna, and have long ago ousted the Lithuanians from the land. Things Lithuanian in Vilna are like the water mark in a gay coloured postage stamp. The name of the town is Lithuanian, the suburbs still have Lithuanian names, Antokol and Bokšta, "On the Mountain" and "The Tower". The ruins of the stronghold of Gediminas and the Temple of Fire rise high above the roofs of the town, desolate and neglected a symbol of the condition of his people.

One cannot help noticing this fourfold division as soon as one has passed the Russian frontier.

There is always something impressive, something grand on entering the realms of Russia immaterial as to where one crosses its border. It is no doubt only the knowledge that one has set foot on such a tremendous country which causes that sensation.

It was an August evening at sunset and in showery weather that seated in a small vehicle I passed over the lowered iron chain which, stretched across a high road, seperated Prussia from the Russian empire. On both sides of the road was a small birch forest and open places had been cut

Vilna.

between the white stems where poles indicated the further direction of the frontier. It was only with great difficulty that I was allowed to pass the frontier, I, my passport, and my luggage were most carefully examined and found to be so suspicious that only a letter to the Governor-General of Vilna saved me; if I had not had that letter in my pocket I should not have been able to proceed any further that day. It seemed as if it would be such an easy thing to turn a little off the road and drive through the birches and between the poles, but the bullets of the soldiers had to be considered; in any case one would require a wily and well paid Jew to circumvent this iron chain.

I did however get into Russia that evening; we first drove through a forest of firs with pools like small lakes into which the wheels sank over the axles. Then we came to a wide plain and I felt as if I could scent Russia. In the distance a Cossack was having a struggle with his horse, it reared on its hind legs and winced at every lash from the whip. The angry rider was evidently making for us, but we put on a spurt, my Jew and I. "Where the d— are you going" he spouted in Russian, "whom are you driving"? Pushing his horse he came towards us and I soon felt the hot breath of his horse in my face. "What do those boxes contain"? The Jew was at no loss for an answer:

Peasants at the church.

"He is a very fine gentleman, are you mad to make such a fuss. He is going straight to the Governor-General of Vilna, he has a letter from the King in his own Country. Ho, ho, there are fine things in his boxes, everything is all right". The Jew gave me a nudge to give the Cossack a few kopeks.

He took them and disappeared making a wide curve across the plain and I saw him as a dark silhouette still struggling with his rebellious horse. "Nic' wahr mee' Herr das hab' i' chut chemacht. Jetzt cheben Se mer en wenich meir'!" my Jew laughed. This was real Russia just inside the frontier. We drove past a castle surrounded by huge forests, formerly a mighty Polish Pan ruled there, now this castle is owned by the family of a Russian general, one of those who distinguished themselves in the Polish wars. The Pole had been smoked out. A small village lies close to the road, the lights in the low timbered houses have been put out, and no human beings are to be seen. It was only at the crossways that I noticed an old greyclad peasant: "Labas vakaras! Padėk Dieve". The Lithuanian language! The church bells too could have told me that I was in a Roman Catholic country, had I known what the three long strokes after the prayer bell signified.

"He had a letter from the king" . . . (A. M. Benedicktsen).

It is Russia which rules Lithuania, rules her through her brutal strength. Russia obtained Lithuania as a floundering prey, her share from the bloody

feast, the partition of Poland, and she has held her prey with iron claws.

If they cannot crush the Polish nation the Polish at any rate will never again possess Lithuania, of that the Russians are of one mind, also far beyond the circles where they wish for the annihilation of everything Polish. Aye, it is no longer a question of power it is a matter of honour, a national question for the Russian people to bear Lithuania bodily and spiritually away from the embrace of Poland.

A greyclad old peasant.

It is the misfortune of the Lithuanian people in the first instance that both Russians and Poles have entirely overlooked the fact of their having a national existence. For the Poles "Litwa" is the one half of the legitimate Polish kingdom: for the Russians "Litva" is the old White-Russian Grand-Duchy with language and history in common with all the other Russias. The nation is Russian, for centuries suppressed nationally and religiously by the little Polish kings, now again reunited with her great progenitor, and it is a holy duty for Russia to aid and raise up this cowed peasant people. In this country the hatred between Russians and Poles has attained its greatest height, this hatred which rests on a deep mutual misunderstanding.

Nothing was said and nothing was written about the Lithuanian people, the dwellers in Gediminas's heritage in Russia or in Poland. The world was as silent about Lithuania, as she was about herself in her desolate little corner of the world. Everything turned upon the settlement of power between the Russians and the Poles. The moment the Russian Government and the Russian upper classes realized that Poland would not loosen her grip on Lithuania without it being cut in two, the endless inhuman petty war commenced. The Poles were to be "smoked out" of Lithuania. Russia crushed with brutal hardness the many ill-advised rebellions, and the intelligence of Russia jubilantly applauded the executioners when carrying out their bloody judge-

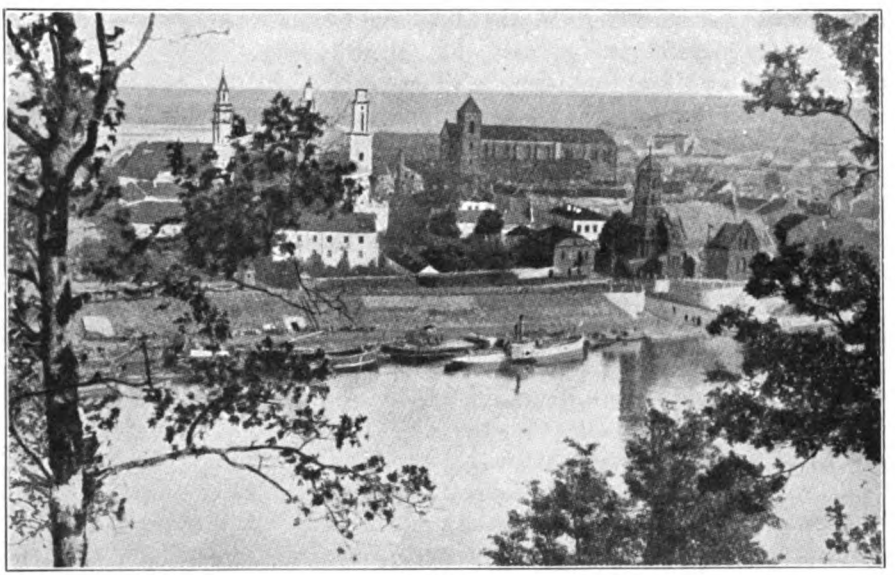
Gediminas's heritage.

ments. There are still places in Lithuania with burnt out uninhabited villages, and desolate country houses, with neglected fields covered with weeds instead of corn, whilst their former owners or their kin live desolate and forgotten in a distant corner of Russia or Siberia.

Mickiewicz.

The cause of Poland seems lost in Lithuania from all other points of view than that of the Poles themselves. They *will* not give up Lithuania in spite of the country nationally viewed not belonging to Poland. Only a small portion of the inhabitants is Polish, but history and sentiment are here so powerful a tie that all talk about national right is pooh poohed by the Poles.

Lithuania harbours in her very name so much for every susceptible Polish soul that a Poland without Lithuania seems an impossibility. The greatest Polish Kings, the Jagielloneans hail from Lithuania, the most brilliant names amongst the Polish nobility, and the great men, the best and the noblest defenders of the Republic in the years of misfortune belong to "Litwa", to



Kovno.

the Lithuanian or White-Russian Lithuania which is all the same to the Polish patriot. To Vilna and Kovno the name of Mickiewicz belongs, he was born in Lithuania the country he lauds in his most beautiful poem "Pan Tadeusz", a whole host of celebrated names in the literature of Poland belong to Lithuania, and this country, this much beloved country should now be lost to Poland!

Jews.

If it were only the white Tsar and his helpers who wished to crush the Poles in Lithuania then they need not give up hope altogether but the very ground under their feet is giving way. The few hundred big men who with their free followers constituted that complex of power which was called Poland in their palmy days troubled but little about what kind of humble folks inhabited the land whose fate they shared. There must be somebody to plough and harvest, to buy and sell, to tan the hides and timber the houses, to all this low toiling which was a necessity in order that the flower of the land might flourish. As to whether these people spoke Polish or Russian or Lithuanian or German was altogether a matter of secondary importance. This was why Poland hospitably opened her doors for Germany's tormented Jews; they were diligent and hard working people so why not use them. Therefore the Polish kings called in numbers of Germans and filled the towns of the country with foreigners. Therefore Poland only thought of conquering the upper class of Lithuania when the two countries were united and the powers in Poland felt themselves secure when by degrees this was accomplished. It was only later that those in power became aware of this fatal mistake by the ever increasing unrest within their Greek Catholic lands. They tried to bring about order and peace in the mob by uniting the obstinate heretics, by a blending of bribary and severity, with the Papal church, in the famous compromise: »The unified church«. It was too late or badly managed — this unrest had come to a head amongst the most independent of Poland's subjects the Cossacs, and Poland received a deadly blow in the terrible Ukraine wars, 1648—67 in which the Russian Tsar intervened. They succeeded in subduing the opposition, the country remained

White Russian patriot from the XVIth century. V. Ciapinski.

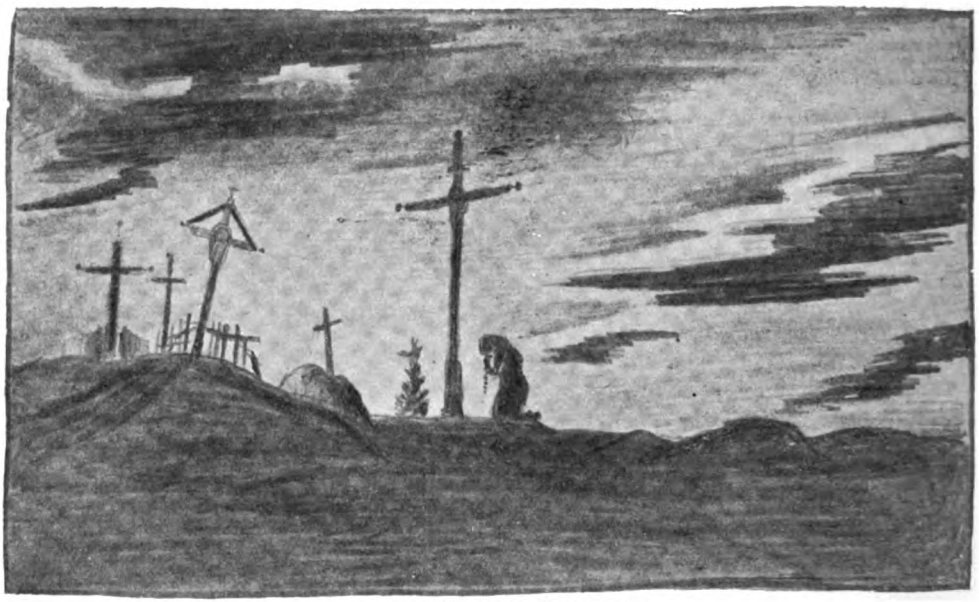
in the hands of Poland, the people were united with the Roman Catholic Church but the tie which was to bind the lower classes to their masters was so loose and superficial that they continued to remain the same alien serfs and now that the Poles have lost the glory of their mastery, the ground has given way under their feet. The White-Russian peasantry have hardly much feeling left for their former masters. Yet there is one chain which connects hundreds of thousands of White-Russian peasants with the Polish people: the chain between the Roman Church in Poland and her child the unified Church in White Russia; through their sufferings under the persecutions by the Government of the Tsar, countless White Russians kept up a religious fellow feeling with Poland. It is tragic that Poland's feeling of sympathy for the ill-treated Russians awoke and that a human work should begin the very evening before the night of Poland set in.

White Russian tapestry.

Lithuanians. When work is over.

Very different was the progress of fate in Lithuanian Lithuania; the people here were Roman Catholic as were the Poles themselves, so there was no cause for religious strife when heathenism had been banished. The people's own old chieftain families, its princes and mighty ones had become its suppressors and been merged into the polish nobility. The impotence of the people became lamentable, the German Knights had been vanquished and with their overthrow vanished their warlike spirit, but the worst was that Lithuania nationally stood so entirely alone. The peoples who could have formed a connection between them

and the outer world, the Prussians in the west, the Letts in the north were either crushed or under equally severe suppression by the Germans. The Lithuanians were driven back into themselves, bodily and spiritually closed in, in their peasant villages. Only religion showed the way upwards and the way out from these tightly bound chains, and the people became dulled and with a childlike faith, but strangely enough without fully accepting the Christian religion in their spiritual life; they did not feel it as an all embracing power, it was not within them but above them.



On the churchyard. (Rustic drawing).

It was only that mighty wonderful outer power to which they clung. The clergy were Poles, the language of the church Latin, both these factors tended to lift everything into a strange awe inspiring sphere. To this day Lithuania uses Polish words for the Christian fundamental conceptions, such as sin, baptism, and communion, and for the church conceptions such as absolution and confession. For priest they use an old word which really signifies king: kunigas; it shows what a powerful position the priests have held in the Lithuanian villages. The priests knew how to use the sway they obtained over the minds of the people, to strenghten the Polish rule, so that the people hardly felt it as a wrong that they were governed by foreign

masters. When the Lithuanian language and nationality had once been driven away from all power and glory, had been reduced to become the possession of the peasantry alone, had been reduced so as to lose every vestage of political significance, the language not even being called Lithuanian but only the "peasant language" (chlopski), then it was left in peace.

The farm.

The Lithuanian language however had full play behind the low timbered walls and in the grass grown orchards, behind the plough, and at the spinning wheel, no foreign interference, no attempt to root out language and tradition. This was the golden age of folklore. In this very suppression in this painful position, the people possessed that heavenly lack of responsibility which is the true mother of lyric conception. The Lithuanians had a peace of mind which enabled them to sing at their work.

The Lithuanian folk songs have plenty of misery and enough of sorrow over their suppression, bitter complaints against their overbearing masters, who only took from them their toil, their blood and their beauty; but they do not bear witness of defiance or any conscious resistance; they honestly reveal that the people suffered but endured.

Kanklés.

There is no variation, not a trace of history in this long wearisome night of labour. The only literature printed in the language of the land of the Polish Lithuanians consisted in catechisms and cancionales, religious tracts and books of sermons, an odd dictionary, work done by the priests and Jesuits, Poles as far as education went but Lithuanians by extraction or sentiment.

Every one of Lithuanian birth who by money, ability, or luck attained to a greater degree of culture and a better position was lost to the people. These more pushing sons of peasants had to discard their past and build

up a new future on Polish ground. The priests however did not altogether neglect the enlightenment of the Lithuanians, at every church they kept a school for the children of the district, the peasant children or at least the boys were taught religion, they learnt to read the catechism and hymns in their mother tongue and sometimes also in Polish. Aye, there were even such wonderful things in the times of the Poles as the estate of the Oginskis, Retovo in Samogitia, a little kingdom of 10,000 souls living in 97 villages where everything was arranged in simple and ideal way according to the notions of those days, good roads, schools, libraries, and "no Jews", the latter were not even allowed to walk across the lands of the estate, There was also the Brzostowski estate Pavlovo near Vilna; by the consent of the Polish Diet, the owner made his estate a republic, he gave all the peasants land and the rights of free men, he ruled his land by means of a chamber, the members of which were elected by the people, he erected schools, a hospital and a bank, — but as a whole the people were grossly ignorant, as dull and as stagnant as anywhere in Europe.

The political downfall of Poland was but little felt in the Lithuanian villages; both spiritually and bodily they remained under the sway of the same squire, and that in some isolated cases the Polish squire was replaced by a Baltic-German or a Russian really made no difference. Yet some faint effects from the upheaval of the nations after Napoleon's defeat in Russia were felt even in this isolated corner; there are signs which indicate that the Lithuanian peasants had an inkling that something was going on in the world. There is for instance the song of a young peasant who was made to serve in the war against France and who writes home to his sweetheart:

"Towards France I now am marching,
But on this you may depend:
Wait awhile, and you will see me
Free you all when I return."

When misfortune in earnest came upon Poland after the insurrection in 1831 the Lithuanians however did not by any means avail themselves of the troubled position of their masters; on the contrary the lower classes felt as if they were their fellow sufferers, under the persecution by the heretics of the Roman Catholic Poles. In many places the peasants offered armed resistance against the Russians for which they had to pay heavily. Time after time the Russian rulers disarmed the restive people, taking away from them every single weapon both fire arms and swords and they were not even permitted to walk with a stick unless they had the permission of the gen-

darmes. Scythes and sickler were officially sealed and were only allowed to be used when actually needed for work.

Here and there amongst the people a few isolated sparks smouldered under the ashes; true they did not lead to any rising, no national hope sprang up, but there arose a greater craving for knowledge. Then a little band of men of Lithuanian extraction, possessed of Polish culture but thoroughly conversant with the language of their fatherland came forward to supply food for this hunger. A few warm-hearted patriots who thought that the time was ripe and that the people were about to awake from their state of serfdom gathered round the clearheaded Bishop Valančauskis. The Bishop in his charming little book "Palangos Juze" (Joseph from Polangen) describes the plain homely life of the Lithuanians of the period. This book is fresh like the spring imbued with a folk poesie so true and so unaffected, that one is inclined to think it would be a pity to rouse this people from their dreams when they can make life so light and happy, but the whole description is more especially a subtle yet modest vindication of his beloved overlooked people's right to live. The foremost worker in the cause was however Simanas Daukantas; he gave up the whole of his life to unpaid thorough and difficult investigations of the position of Lithuania in former times and at intervals he published a number of pamphlets for the enlightenment of the peasants. He died poor and unhappy without having had the satisfaction of seeing his chief works published, or a single hope fulfilled. His selfdenying patriotism went so far that he published each of his books under a different name in order to make the Poles believe that there were quite a number of Lithuanian writers.

Grottger: Lithuania. Fight against the Russians.

It was a time of unrest and fermentation and great things were in course of preparation. Russia was in the pangs of labour over the liberation of the

Bishop Valančauskis.

peasantry. In Poland they were striving for a last desperate rising. The two events followed so close upon each other, and overlapped each other in their effect upon the whole position of the Lithuanian people to such an extent that they must be viewed jointly. The liberation of the peasants took place so early that it saved the Lithuanians from being forced into a rebellion which they did not comprehend and from which they could derive no advantage. The last rising of Poland was a wild act of which the more far seeing Poles bitterly disapproved, and which they only reluctantly were induced to join. It was no small number however of Lithuanian peasants who took up the cause of the landed proprietors and the Poles of the towns. Exite, imprisonment or the gallows were their rewards for following the call of the Polish gentlemen.

It was an easy task for Russia to subjugate the country.

In the midst of all this cheap jubilation over the Lithuanian land distribution, it was suddenly discovered that this cowed country at bottom was non-Russian. The people could not by an imperative decree be forced in under the Russian Church to which they had never belonged. The Russian authorities had to face a strange people of whose language and of whose past they knew nothing, and whose claim to existence they were disposed to ignore.

Grottger:
"Lithuanian forest".

This was a time in Russia when evil and good tried issues. The brief breeze of freedom was dying out, the wonderful wave which had burst such mighty dams had lost its first strength and reaction heavily made its way ahead, making itself felt in the policy of the empire towards the Lithuanian people.

Russian enthusiasts who at one fell swoop wanted to make the whole people free and independent throughout the realm, and sour reactionaries bent upon stopping all further

reformatory work and upon putting a bar to the "demagogical assault", and using their power to their own advantage, met in Lithuania.

"The Lithuanian people lowered by the Polish nobility and the Latin clerical sway should be elevated", and at an unfortunate moment it was found expedient, in order to encrease the people's feeling of independence, to prohibit the use of the Latin alphabet in Lithuanian printed matter; the use of the Russian alphabet was made compulsory, that would at one stroke free the people from the Poles, and unite them with Russia, was the opinion of the shortsighted politicians. It might perhaps appear to be of small importance in what kind of letters the language was written, but in reality none of the means of suppression which the Russian rule has brought to bear upon Lithuania can in their disastrous results compare with this "help". The hard and clumsy hands to whom the carrying out of this decree was entrusted administered it in a tyrannical manner to the awakening spiritual life in Lithuania.

ПОТЕРЯЈ ИР МАЛДОС.

Printed matter in Russian letters.

Personal freedom and land had hardly been granted to these peasants before a new war was declared; at the very time when the liberated serfs were in the greatest need of support, the rulers in question strove to undo everything.

Mickiewicz' house in Kovno.

The Lithuanian people are Roman Catholics; what little enlightenment they then possessed they had received from their priests, what reading they could master was exclusivily confined to Lithuanian translations of religious works and hymns — the youthful Lithuanian polite literature was in its first infancy, and but few of the people had become possessed of it — everything of course being printed with Latin letters. Suddenly to introduce an unknown alphabet was to make the people unable to read. Common sense and the Roman Church were of one mind in rising in all their Lithuanian strength against this ruthless decree. The priests forbid all Christians to use any sacred book printed in heretic letters. Openly in the pulpit, and secretly in the confessional they urged the peasants not to give in, nor

allow their children to be demoralized by this order, and the peasants looked upon it as the first attempt to drive them from the Papal church — the decree became an insufferable coercion which they defied, taking the consequences that ensued. The Russian rulers were determined to fight it out, they caused the Latin alphabet to be transcribed into a Russian one, which but inadequately answered the requirements of the Lithuanian language, and this transcription was enforced by law.

It was prohibited anywhere in Lithuania to print anything with Latin letters in the Lithuanian language; offenders would be punished by deportation. No one was allowed to have in his home Lithuanian books printed after the date of the decree in question either within or outside the Russian dominions, offenders to be punished by fines or imprisonment. An annual sum of 2—4000 roubles was set aside for the printing of those books in Russian letters which the Government thought necessary for the Lithuanians — the faith and enlightenment of far more than two millions of souls to be provided for at an expense not exceeding £ 450!

The next step consisted in doing away with all the small reading schools in connection with the Roman Catholic Churches. Wherever the priests and the peasants were suspected of disobedience, and there was every reason for such suspicion, the police and the gendarmes broke into the houses, examined everything, dissolved and suppressed everything they considered contrary to the law.

Under the lofty pretext that Russia would emancipate the Lithuanian people and free them from the sway of the Polish nobility and priests, the most reckless work of national demolition was inaugurated which in our time has been resorted to against any nation. These two—three millions of Lithuanians, plain and simple people, without any higher enlightenment, without a spokesman to plead their cause before their oppressors, without a voice strong enough to cry out beyond their frontier of what was going on, these people were hopelessly at the mercy of their arbitrary rulers. They had not a single friend to defend their national rights. The Polish upper classes had always despised this people of peasants on whose land they lived, and they had besides too many troubles of their own to think of the affairs of others. The Jews and the Germans had no interest and could not have any in the people, whose simplicity they exploited time after time, becoming more independent and enlightened.

To begin with the Russians had no intention of entirely annihilating the Lithuanian nationality; they only desired to unite this people more closely with the Russian realm, but the first clumsy move was received with such

desperate resistance and defiance that the Russians grew wrath and thought it would be easier to cut the knot than to untie it, easier to pull down all the pillars of Lithuanian nationality and force them to accept Russian nationality. Triumphant Russian reaction sent her hungry flocks down upon the Lithuanian land. The mental bunglers which constituted the first band of Russian civilizers in the schools and Government-Offices were even in Lithuania too insignificant to reap anything but hatred and contempt. Men too incapable and inferior to obtain any position in the home country became teachers in the Lithuanian villages. Former non-commissioned officers, would-be teachers unable to pass their exams, intemperate sons of Russian priests, seedy individuals from different social classes — these were the kind of men who obtained the minor offices in Lithuania. There is still a pretty string of tales from those days, tales of those in authority whose only ambition was to show the people that it was they who held the switch, of brutal soldiers who were made chief constables and whose delight it was to tear about in troika and strike terror amongst their subordinates — for two years it pleased the Russians to use Lithuania as a colony for criminals, felons were sent there; in order further to strengthen the Russian element facilities were provided for Russian peasant settlers and twelve hundred families proceeded to Lithuania, but as a matter of fact it was the Russians who became Lithuanianized, although the Russian criminals had a bad influence on the people.

Every kind of association immaterial of its purpose, every gathering with the exception of Divine service were prohibited under severe punishment. This put a stop to the temperance movement which in the course of a few years had gained the support of thousands, and it also put a stop to all the preliminary labour for practical cooperation. The Lithuanians had not even the rights which were granted to the peasants in the Russian empire. Everything had to be managed by Imperial officials — all the Justices of the Peace had to be Russians and in the Courts of Law Lithuanian was only allowed to be spoken by an interpreter. In order to subdue national feeling the Lithuanians were forbidden to wear their national dress. But what was the good of all this! What was the good of ordering the people to read books printed in Russian letters, what was the good of depriving them of the books they could read! What was the good of Russian teachers and gendarmes, of Russian judges and colonies of criminals, this did not transform the Lithuanians into Russians, the only outcome of all this was hatred and distrust which grew from day to day, and in their church they had a consolidating power strong enough to set every assault at defiance. The

Russians were not long in realizing this; they saw the blow must be directed against the church.

When one comes across national suppression on German soil one feels that it is subject to certain laws and limits, that it respects certain human claims and in any case allows the suppressed ones to air their grievances.

Old Lithuanian national dresses.

In Russia it is not so. The Russians have learnt from the Germans that a country is not conquered because it has been made to pay taxes, but that it is a question of taking possession of every conquered soul, transform every conquered individual into a citizen in a new community. Russia however does not own that instrument of power which is invested in German kultur and German mental superiority; the Russian State therefore employs the instruments of power at her disposal.

On Russian soil freedom of speech is prohibited and freedom of conscience is not acknowledged: in medieval fashion they regard a common faith as the best protection for the State. When a subject is duly inscribed in the books of the state church, he is looked upon as a full blown citizen. The attainment of this goal is considered of such importance that where the priest and the church fail in achieving this, the police and the legal decrees are resorted to, in harmony with Russian unity in State and church, that is the police and the priests.

Old church.

Almost all the Roman Catholic churches in Lithuania are old and tumble-down, they are nearly all of wood, hurriedly built by Polish landowners for their peasant serfs. The few stone churches to be found in the more important places are nearly all delapidated, in the time of unrest neglected by the Poles, and afterwards by the Russian administration. Many of these sanctuaries present a pitiful appearance, the

plaster is cracked, the stones giving way, the railings broken, the wood-work rotten, and repairs hardly ever take place, all reparation being practically forbidden, they are only possible when permitted by the police.

Village church.

No church can be built, no bricks inserted, not a wall can be steadied, not even a delapidated cross by the roadside can be replaced. This decree has become one of the chief weapons against the Roman Catholic church.

As has just been stated the Roman Catholic churches are allowed to fall in ruins, and no new ones are built. The people have not the right to settle their own affairs, nor can they dispose of their common funds, the Russian officers arrange everything for them. The Lithuanians have to witness the one Russian church after the other being built in their country and paid for with their money wherever there happen to be a few Greek Catholics, or wherever by chance there is a Russian garrison, officious »strebers« make a fuss about there being no church. There are now about a hundred churches in this old Roman Catholic country, and for every year one or more Roman churches are closed and sealed by the authorities as being unsafe, or they are burnt down, and must not be re-erected. The peasants then have the choice

Entrance to an old wooden church.

either of doing without a church, or going to one some distance off, but what is still more important for the Russian rulers is the fact that the priest disappears with the church and his influence is removed, for this makes it easier to draw the people to the orthodox church. In the east part of the country in the district of Vilna where the Lithuanian folk come in closer contact with the Russians, the strife is bitterest; many parishes which formerly had Roman Catholic priests, have become Russian. The peasants were induced by the usual fraudulent promises of exemption from taxes, of land, of freedom from conscription and other advantages, to forsake their church, and their children were forced by baptism into the Russian church; there are places where the priest was bought to give up his parish to the Government and although the peasants staunchly refused to acknowledge the sale of their souls by their priest, they have from that day not been allowed to hold Roman Catholic services; officially they are counted as orthodox. This for instance is the case at Paberžis. By the closing of the monasteries and the driving out of the monks, the Roman Catholic church lost another of its mainstays.

Going to church.

The Russian authorities soon realized that the battle was not so easily won, that the mind of the people was only further embittered, and that resistance grew more determined; instead af altering their tactics these minor servants of the State in their shortsightedness saw but one way out of the difficulty, namely, to adopt still more ruthless measures and under Alexander III the oppression of the people assumed shameful dimensions.

In the roughest manner the churches were taken from the people and

transformed into Russian churches. In eastern Lithuania Russian schoolmasters on Imperial high days simply drove the children into the Russian churches probably in the naive belief that the children would be impressed and imbued with awe.

In order to put a stop to a closer connection between the Roman Catholic priests they were forbidden to visit other parishes without permission of the police, such visits occasionally take place in the Roman Catholic church where the priests often require assistance from their colleagues.

Church in Vilna.

I order no doubt to undermine the people's respect for the church the police were expressly ordered at the services to read aloud the imperial decrees in Russian; in full uniform, with sword and clanging spurs they thundered out the incomprehensible words over the kneeling congregation.

The old decrees against the Lithuanian language were carried out with merciless severity; it was entirely forbidden to sell Lithuanian books even such as were printed before the issue of the decree and this order was carried out so rigorously, that it was futile to look for a single Lithuanian book were it ever so innocent in the shops of the Lithuanian towns.

The authorities however were quite aware that all the same the peasants

had books in the prohibited language, in any case religious books, for "luckily" there are Jews in Lithuania.

Therefore it was decided at the council of the Governor General to let the police make a search all over the country, and according to a plan agreed upon, the gendarmes made a descent on the Lithuanian parishes.

Roadside cross

The peasants were accustomed to se a couple of policemen watching the churchgoers on holy days — but churchgoers and police had become indifferent, they did not take any notice of each other and everything went on in the usual way; but one Sunday the tramping of horses was heard during the service and huge bearded gendarmes dismounted in front of the church. The day of reckoning had arrived, and the peasants in the midst of their singing were filled with fear — it was a case of everyone trying to conceal his treasures — the police seized hymn books and gospels — those who could hurried home through forest and meadow, but many were obliged to give up their books — the gendarmes made their way into the farmsteads searching and rummaging, frightening the people by their rough language if any one had ventured to conceal these accursed books which the Tsar himself had prohibited, all books had to be given up, everyone! Although these official robbers only succeeded in finding a part of these books, enough were collected to make a huge autodafé in Vilna where the books of the poor Lithuanians were transformed into regulation smoke and ashes.

The offenders did not all escape with merely losing their books, both men and women had to spend months in prison when the gendarme officers happened to be in a bad humour or special circumstances enhanced the offence.

The authorities have done their best to frustrate the fervent religious movement which under the surface filled the Lithuanian mind, their secret societies

and mystical clubbing together more especially between the young women. They were prohibited and the offenders were persecuted time after time, sent to prison or deported.

The war against the Lithuanian language war carried so far that a ukase was issued which simply prohibited parents from letting their children learn to read Lithuanian. If it were found out that the children learnt their mother tongue in the homes it meant a fine of 300 roubles, which again meant that only the rich were able to pay it. At the same time judges and other officials were urged to enforce a knowledge of Russian amongst the people, as an instance the Governor General Hurko of Poland may be mentioned, who with delightful naiveté in the order of the day expressed his surprise at people in his domain not being able to master the language of the fatherland!

Who could guess at the misfortunes which hover over this people when standing in the midst of the deep glorious wealth of forest which covers the high hills surrounding the river, when inhaling the fresh scent from fir and larch and feeling that peace and gentleness which makes the heart glad; who could guess at all this evil when sailing down the Niemen late on a summer's evening in the glow of the setting sun, and seeing the timbered houses with the light on the windows lying so wonderfully snug and sheltered on the outskirts of the forest, seeing the slender trees framing the little church with its cross glittering above the tree tops; how could one suspect the misery of these peasants when wandering through dewy fields listening to the tinkling of the cow bells, and the singing of girls, and watching the young peasants in happy talk with each other making their way homewards after the day's labour.

At such a moment one involuntarily exclaims: How foolish, how shameless we human beings are — all this misery, all this injustice in such solemn peace and beauty where everything speaks only of goodwill and happiness.

But Lithuania cannot shake off her nightmare, her historical misfortune in a glorious summer night's dream!

In dull work-a-day greyness, in frost and heat the Lithuanian peasants have to fight their wearisome fight, have to bear, suffer or succumb.

However desperate man's position may appear, he will always seek and will also find a certain balance, a form for his existence which all the same is tolerable, and if the human mind has never known other conditions of life, it may find happineness, be the heavens ever so dark.

The Russian Lithuanians know their conditions of life, know their masters and have arranged their life accordingly; it is all the more necessary to make the best of what chances there are still left for them.

Of a free national life the people know nothing. Its ancient history prior to Christianity and serfdom has entirely vanished from their vision. Their spiritual life, a literature of their own, an art of their own, was tiny and weak as a naked nestling. Any enlightenment outside Roman Catholicism, the meanest knowledge of reading and figures was a treasure for but the few.

Lithuanian types.

Even national consciousness, the feeling of community with all those speaking the same language was only in its infancy when serfdom was abolished.

The whole people were like a sunscorched fallow field, yearning for the rain from heaven, for plough and harrow and the sower.

It was at this stage that the great oppression came upon them.

There could however hardly be any question of eradicating the Lithuanian nation or of altogether Russianizing the country although this no doubt was in the minds of some of their brutal oppressors.

The Russians at once encountered the hatred of every one in the country and the contempt of the Polish upper class. Even a simple Lithuanian peasant on the strength of his faith and the word of his priest, felt himself superior to these heretical conquerors, whose representatives in Lithuania, mean and greedy officials, gendarmes, and Cossacs did not tend to imbue respect.

As a matter of fact the advance of Russian nationality in Lithuania is altogether insignificant.

On the very borders where White Russian people come in contact with the Lithuanians, the Lithuanians have receded, but this receding movement

is of old date and is in the first instance due to other causes than the present violent campaign against the Lithuanian people. To what extent the Lithuanian language has been supplanted in those districts has not been accurately ascertained, the two languages to some extent overlap each other and no recent investigation of the question has been undertaken. In those frontier parts the Russian administration brings all possible pressure to bear upon the Roman Catholic population, parishes are rearranged, churches are closed, and things are called Russian which are not Russian.

In Samogitia live — after a hundred years rule and thirty years Russianizing in spite of artificial colonisation and Russian monopolizing of all offices — only 40,000 Greek Catholics in a population of 1,625,000. In the middle of the 19th century there were 18,000 and the increase is only due to the growth of the families and barely that, for in addition several thousand Russian officials and merchants have taken up their abode in the country and it must not be forgotten that in the Russian empire all the children of mixed marriages, that is between Russians and people of other religions, must belong to the State church; this will give some idea of what little progress Russianizing proper makes in the heart of Lithuania — in fact it does not make any.

If the laws Russia has enforced upon the suppressed people were really brought to bear upon them to the full extent of the letter, if these unhappy people were really kept within the limits which imperial ukases and the orders of the day of the Governor General decreed, life would hardly have been bearable even to a people with the most pathetically small demands for mental development; even the Lithuanian peasantry would have been choked or putting it more plainly they would have had violently to break the barriers which choked them or — they would have withered entirely.

But luckily in Russia a law is one thing, but its being carried out is another, to command is one thing in Russia, to make the people obey is another.

The old saying: "Ut desint vires, tamen est laudanda voluntas", might appropriately be used as a motto for this chapter of Russian official life.

It looks as if these laws in some instances were made for the purpose of affording the badly paid officials pecuniary aid, inasmuch as the people have to bribe them in order to make them close their eyes.

The Russians seem to have a strange humane conception; no one feels more than these officials themselves that this oppression carried out in its full severity is at variance with all human feeling, in short impossible. Therefore the instrument of the law is frequently applied with reasonable consideration, it is used to smooth the surface and further the proper currents below.

"Live and let live" is a saying of which the Russian administration fully approves.

At times it is only a clumsy and rigid maintenance of a law in operation. which sets the humane western mind ablaze.

During the thirty years in which the prohibition against the printing of Lithuanian books, and against the sale of all kinds of Lithuanian literature has been in operation, the office of the Governor General in Vilna has been the authorised and monopolised bureau of enlightenment and diffuser of knowledge for the Lithuanian people.

The young generation.

The handsome sum of £ 300 has been set aside every year for this purpose, and the outcome so far in the way of Litvo Russian "literature" is a score or two of for the most part very diminutive books, inferior translations from the Russian, some A. B. C's for use in the village schools for the teaching of Russian, and a couple of other school books, a catechism, and a prayer book. All the literature which the Russian Government in the course of the five years 1888 to 1893 has printed for Lithuania can be bought for 4 d — it consists of three small translations.

Even a but little developed peasant people have a human right to more! if they dont get more, they help themselves to more.

Outside the schools where the young are compelled to read Russian type, the Lithuanians will have nothing to do with these books; as a sequel to the bonfires in Vilna, there are assuredly many a little paper fire in Lithuanian homes, it is the heretical books which are being consigned to the flames. In Russian Lithuania there are probably no Lithuanian books printed, all the work of supplying these two millions of Lithuanians with books is now done in Prussia. In and near Tilsit, testaments, hymn books, prayer books, and other religious books are printed together with small enlightening pamphlets or collections of dainos, sometimes translations and Lithuanian writings. They are carried across the frontier in hundreds and thousands, whilst the customhouse officers and others concerned goodnaturedly look the other way.

For this large number of books are mostly brought into Russian Lithuania "per fas et nefas", only a small portion is smuggled across the frontier, it is too troublesome and risky. In Lithuania there was, at least formerly, a fixed price to pay to make the frontier guard close their eyes, five roubles for each pood. If there were too much trouble in getting through at one place, an attempt was made at another, and rarely or never had the books to be taken back. Many of these frontier guards have so much kindly feeling, a quality the Russians often have, that they gather from the nature of the books whether they can let them pass with a good conscience, read them they cannot. The Jews who generally act as middle men, understand with surprising cunning when it is a question of more dangerous matter to get it safely into the hands of the buyer.

One can often come across a Lithuanian book the contents and print of which clearly show that it is of quite recent date, but on the cover stands in Russian: Permitted by Censor, Vilna 1864, the last year it was permissable to print Lithuanian books in Russia. It is an old trick which has often saved a book from falling into the hands of the police, but now it is getting a little too well known.

It is both difficult and expensive for the Lithuanian peasants to procure books, yet it is a rare exception to find a farm or even a small house in the whole country without any books at all; there is always a prayer book, a testament or some religious books and very often other kinds are to be found.

Even if the gendarmes should undertake a search, they generally allow some books to remain, and what they take can often be bought back from the Jews, they even say that it is not quite impossible to save something from the bonfire at Vilna, gendarmes with an eye to the main chance passing some of the booty on to a Jew from whom the owners get back their lost treasures subject to a reasonable remuneration.

The Government has abolished all the Roman Catholic schools in the whole country, school after school was closed, the pupils dispersed, and too resistant teachers severely punished. With ill advised violence the Russians entirely did away with the old schools in Lithuania, a school in Lithuania was to be like a school in the interior of Russia; in a completely strange country where Russian so to speak was only known by name, in a country where neither socially nor economically it was advantageous to know Russian, this language was all at once to be used exclusively. But the Russian teachers who were sent to replace the Roman Catholic priests and lay teachers were received with such coldness and distrust, that during the first few years

the schools were almost empty. As long as the Lithuanians could find teachers for their children outside the enforced foreign schools, they kept them away from the Russian.

All the Russian village schools in Samogitia in a population of more than a million had altogether 2,444 boys and 89 girls the first year after the suppression of the rebellion and barely half of these were Lithuanian.

The peasants however were compelled to erect Russian schools all over the country especially in the beginning, when the police and the officials were more zealous.

By various methods many peasants were made to send their children to these schools, but more than a twentieth part of the Lithuanian children in Samogitia never attended a Russian school during these thirty years. The figures have even decreased during the last ten years in spite of the increase of the population. In 1885 the Russian statistics for Samogitia give the number of the children in the village schools in 1885 as 10,659, in 1892 this figure was reduced to 9,362; how many of these were Lithuanian is not stated, but they were probably seven eighths of the whole number.

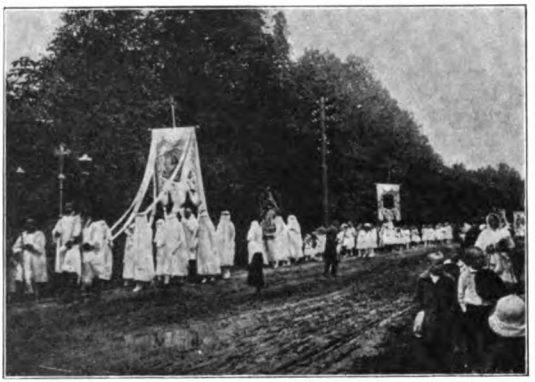
Boys.

The first teachers who from all the corners of Russia came to the Lithuanian villages as miserable bread-seekers without knowing the language or customs of the country, and without possessing even the poorest qualifications for carrying out their difficult task, brought the schools into such bad repute, that it had been difficult to raise them again in the eyes of the peasantry, although much is now being done in that direction, nor is the fund of knowledge which even the best of these schools can offer, particularly satisfactory. This tedious hammering of the Russian language into the children, which must strike the pupils as being just as senseless as if it were Mesopotamian, is the Alpha and Omega of the Russian system. The language has to be used in all subjects, so a certain superficial glibness is achieved, which without exception is lost again should the children remain at home, and the children at school only come across their mother tongue in the glossary of the Russian schools books. Only in a limited part of the Lithuanian area in the kingdom of Poland is instruction given, or rather permitted to be given in the mother tongue, three hours a week, but as it is optional

for the masters whether or not to give this instruction it does not as a rule amount to very much.

It would be a bad look-out if the Russian schools were the only source of knowledge for the people. Alongside with these however have worked and still work a number of small secret schools where the children learn to read their mother tongue, are taught religion and sometimes the Polish language. To begin with these schools were to be the means of keeping the people in Polish hands and preventing them from becoming Russian; young enthusiastic men and women gave their time and money for this purpose and the children gathered in the houses of the Roman Catholic priests. In many places the gendarmes apparently winked at these peasant schools, they were quite aware of their existence but influenced by persuasive words or gifts they allowed them to go on. Of late years the fight against them has been more rigorous, the controllers have caught several teachers red handed and through administrative decrees severe punishment, imprisonment and deportation, has overtaken the offenders. In the cottages and farmsteads relatives and parents have taught many a Lithuanian boy the rudiments of his mother tongue, and the fine of three hundred roubles which is the punishment for this offence has not altogether been able to frighten them.

Grandmother.



A religious procession.

Many of the young girls and married women who seem to mumble the words of their testament when the priest reads, cannot read at all; only a small portion of them can read, for the education of the girls is even worse than that of the boys.

It would be quite a mistake to look upon the Lithuanian resistance against the Russian rule as a conscious fight against some evil, the people entirely lack capability and conception for this. It is much rather involuntary fear of the unknown, an entire distrust of the enemy. The Lithuanians have shunned the Russians.

Just as the Lithuanian peasant lad, bewildered and unmanageable enters a Russian school room and for weeks can hardly be made to answer a single word to the simplest question, so the people as a whole have remained unapproachable to the Russians.

The Lithuanians have silently borne injustice and shameful oppression, neither have they in former days lived under too bright conditions, their exasperation has hardly ever been allowed to manifest itself. It is only in later years when the Russians in earnest began to attack their churches and their national faith that their discontent has become really apparent.

All the surplus of life and feeling which in their narrow channel found no other outlet, flowed into the lap of the church.

Their grief is great when an old wooden church is closed and the peasantry of a whole parish is thereby deprived of the one common treasure.

Simple songs are sung

An old graveyard.

by the peasants about these mournful occurrences and are often composed by the devout peasants themselves; they grieve over their church being closed and their priest expelled, so that they can neither go to confession nor communion. "Pious folks must stand alone, weeping pass along the road, closed they have the churches, altar lights extinguished". Touching is the way in which the peasants protect to the utmost "the signs of God's kingdom" on earth. They often carry with the greatest care a delapidated roadside cross into some thicket and place it there that it may continue to do service and be saved from being removed by the Muscovites.

Some years ago the church at Telšiai in Samogitia was declared to be unfit for use and the priests were ordered to remove the holy vessels and banners and leave the place; but the people could not be induced to give up their church; they almost compelled the unwilling priests to remain and resolved to continue prayers in the church until the Muscovites realized the imposibility of closing that church, for eight weeks the church was never empty either day or night, for eight weeks a faithful watch knelt in prayer and devotion on the floor of the church, and it was only when tired and hungry they were relieved by another watch; women neglected their work at home and took their babes at the breast with them to the church in order to take their part of the holy watch. The priests were obliged to hold service after service, burn incense, and read masses in order to calm their parishioners, but it was all of no avail. After eight weeks "longsuffering" the chief constable of the place with his gendarmes forcibly entered the church and amidst moans and weeping the peasant women and children were dragged out of the church, and the church was sealed. The roof was torn off, and the windows were broken lest anyone should be tempted to renew his devotions.

Only a year and a half ago an event took place in Samogitia some twenty miles from the German frontier which also had reference to a fight about the church, and event of such a revolting nature that the story found its way into the papers all over the world, and perhaps for the first time brought the name of the Lithuanian people to the notice of many. In Denmark special interest was made to attach to the event by the Danish court exercising its influence although in vain to prevent this infamous deed — the closing of the church in Kražiai. Now that all the circumstances of the case are brought to light after the verdict of the court at Vilna, the whole affair throws a clear light over the conditions prevailing in Lithuania. The poor victims who gave their blood in the belief that they were acting rightly have not given it in vain. They have greatly contributed to open the eyes of many of their countrymen to the wretched position of their fatherland; their blood raised

o wave of patriotism amongst the Lithuanians who had emigrated to American and this will assuredly some day benefit their country.

The following description is based upon the pleading of the council for the defendants before the Upper Court at Vilna.

In the little town of Kražiai was one of the last remaining monasteries which the Russians had spared in Lithuania; a small band of Benedictine monks dwelt there living in accordance with the stringent rules of the Government. A ukase however decrees that when a Roman Catholic cloister has dwindeed to eight monks or nuns, it has to be confiscated, and the admission of novices prohibited. In the monastery at Kražiai there were now only eight monks left. The Government through the Governor General of Vilna, the former colonel of gendarmes, Arževski gave orders to have the monks removed, the church closed and pulled down, the timber to be used for the building of a Russian school and the land of the monastery to be handed over to the Russian church of the place.

Telšiai.

In Kražiai besides the church of the monastery there was a wooden church one hundred and fifty years old, and so tumbledown that the peasants knew its course was about run; they had long ago sent a petition to Vilna praying for permission to restore the church of the monastery without however receiving any answer. The peasants to begin with could not believe that they were to lose their best church but they soon saw that the authorities were in earnest. One fine day the old monks were removed although they begged that they might be allowed to die in their monastery. The priest of the place was ordered to take away the holy vessels within a given time, but now the people interfered. A few chosen men proceeded to Vilna and implored Arževski to spare the church. His only reply was that they would all be imprisoned if they dared to make any more difficulties. They then went straight to Tsar Alexander in St. Petersburg and the authorities in Vilna telegraphed to the police of the capital to catch them. By a lucky chance they escaped, succeeded in getting their petition placed in the hands

of the Tsar and feeling assured of the success of their mission they returned to their home. The peasants requested the priests who had come to remove the properties of the church to await the reply from the Tsar. No doubt through some high clerical influence the complaints of the Lithuanians reached Denmark and from there a plea was made for them in St. Petersburg.

Christ. Wood-engraving.

There still came no answer from the Tsar; the priests who only lamely supported the frightened parishioners, were only waiting for an opportunity to carry away the monstrance and the chalice from the sacristy, but the peasants were aware of this and kept watch night and day, two or three at a time, and one morning early the old women overpowered the priest just as he had taken the holy vessels. They bound this Judas and with covered hands they brought back the precious possessions of the church. Then the peasants began to keep up continuous prayers with the priests, until the day when the brutal Governor of Kovno made his appearance in person in order to make an end of the matter. He arrived

in the middle of the night with a band of policemen; he was informed that everything was quiet in the town only some old and young people were in the church praying. There was fear and trembling when the arrival of the Governor became known for the people knew what the authorities were like. The women and the children remained on their knees in the church singing hymns, whilst their husbands and brothers with the crucifix and the pictures of the Tsar and Tsarina met the Guvernor outside the church. They prayed him to spare the church, Klingenberg the Guvernor answered roughly that all their prayers were super- fluous also to the Tsar, that much he could tell them, the church was to be closed and pulled down that night. An angry murmur arose amongst the Lithuanians, but the people began to leave the church. Klingenberg all at once gave orders to beat all that came out and to drive out the women and children with the whip. But then the patience of the Lithuanians was at an end. They felt they were maltreated without cause, and indignation seized them all; a hailstorm of stones and pieces of wood fell upon the gendarmes and their chief. Cowards as that kind of men generally are, the governor and his helpers fled into the church, but the peasants broke open the door and Klin- genberg with his gendarmes and the Polish priest who was all the time on his side had to take refuge in the loft of the church. He now offered to refrain from taking any further steps with regard to the church, and the spokesman of the peasants requested him to report in writing this night's assault to the Governor General of Vilna. Klingenberg wrote for three hours when sud- denly terrified shouts were heard from without: "The Cossacks, the Cossacks"

The women and young girls who were again praying and singing in the church shrieked with terror and the Lithuanian peasants made desperate resistance. The Governor climbed down the ladder, his stratagem had suc- ceeded. An order had been sent secretly to the nearest Cossack camp ten miles away: he had been pretending to write his report knowing all the time 300 Cossacks with spears and pistols were on their way. A short and hideous carnage took place that cold and dark November morning; the long lances of the Cossacks tasted blood, these wild fellows rushed into the church, the women were beaten and bound, altars and banners were cut to pieces and the windows smashed.

A terrified and despairing crowd of peasants were driven on to the thin ice of the river, the ice gave away, some were drowned amidst the coarse shouts and laughter of the Cossacks, some stood in the water until their strength failed them and they went down, most however were dragged ashore and bound.

The rising was crushed and there was not even a Cossack wounded. The church was sealed and Klingenberg let the Cossacks loose on the little town to catch and bind as many as they could get hold of. The Lithuanian peasants shouted: "We do not believe that thou art our Governor, we do not believe that the Tsar has refused our prayer" — Klingenberg promptly avenged himself for this offence. The men who were bound were stripped and flogged, in the presence of the woman and children, as long as the doctor Vasilenko who tried their pulse found it advisable. "Perhaps you will know now who is your Governor" sneered Klingenberg. Lithuanians who escaped have stated that one old woman was flogged to death but this case was not brought before the Court at Vilna, but from what transpired at the proceedings it was ascertained that after they had flogged the men, their wives and young daughters were handed over to the Cossacks. "Thanks for your help" Klingenberg shouted in farewell, "Teper djeti, možno guljat" (There children now you can have some fun). The Cossacks' fun in the little town and its environs lasted for several weeks and the fun was as is usual with the Don Cossacks in the land of the enemy and the Grand Turk.

"Death and blood to the sons of the Turk
His lithesome daughters shall be our reward".

More than fifty persons languished in jail after this affray for ten months, amongst them seventeen women two of whom were young girls.

In spite of all censorship — not a paper in the whole of Russia was permitted to mention what had happened at Kražiai — in spite of the desperate efforts of Klingenberg and Orževski this terrible misdeed of theirs was not ended in accordance with their plans.

Their intention was to deport, without the matter being brought before a court of law, the most troublesome of the imprisoned persons, to Eastern Siberia and keep the rest in jail for an adequate number of years.

As just mentioned this shameful plan did not succeed; for their dastardly deed became widely known, thanks to the Lithuanian papers in Prussia and the best advocates in Russia defended the case of the Lithuanians before the Court at Vilna, where the proceedings had been instituted, because the judges were still less independent in Vilna than in the proper jurisdiction of Kovno; this unfairness to the accused prisoners is hardly worth mentioning when it is a question of Russian rule in Lithuania. The court passed

a "mild" sentence on the prisoners, varying from ten years penal servitude to some months, more than half of them being acquitted. The young Tsar Nicholas however annulled the verdict, all being liberated except four. So much was done for very shame, but at the time of writing this book, both these infamous men still fill their important posts, no comment surely is needed.

There was nothing left for these poor people, unable as they were to avenge themselves, but to bury their dead and mourn this terrible happening, adding it to the great load of sorrow they already had to bear, they could only leave it to Heaven to punish the guilty ones. "A true tale" has gone the round of the villages of why Alexander the Tsar of the Muscovites did not get into Heaven. When the Tsar died, St. Peter severely rebuked him, telling him that a man, who had done so much harm to a good and God fearing people like the Lithuanians, who had closed their churches, expelled the priests. and prohibited the people to keep their holy books and to print new ones, a man who had done all these things could not enter the kingdom of Heaven, and St. Peter then appointed an old Lithuanian shepherd to be the door keeper and he was to take care that the Tsar did not slip in before justice had been done to Lithuania.

Wood-engraving.

"Yes, but how shall I be able to speak to all those who come to the gate", said the shepherd, "I only know my own language". — "That does not matter", answered St. Peter, "at present none but Lithuanians are allowed to get into heaven, because they have suffered so much for the sake of our Lord".

The Lithuanian people have their political foe in the Russians but the Poles are their social and national foes. Polish blood and Polish culture still cover the surface as cream on milk. There is the old contempt and ignoring of the peasant people and the peasant language, the same intolerance against the people maintaining their individual rights alongside of the Polish. If the Lithuanian wants to raise himself above the peasantry he must become Polish. In the part of Lithuania which lies within the kingdom of Poland and which is otherwise the richest and best positioned, Polish arrogance is at its height.

The Poles insist that every possible consideration shall be extended to them; if they only constitute a fair minority, they have often kept up the Polish language in the church, there are even parishes with barely a score of persons speaking Polish where the service all the same is held in their language. They are so unjust and self-asserting that recently when a purely Lithuanian parish was allowed to use the Lithuanian language in the church, the Poles who were present got up and ostentatiously left the church in a body as soon as the priest had said a few words in Lithuanian. It is only as long as it is a question of common fight and common suffering under Russian oppression that they are friends of the Lithuanians, otherwise they must be counted as dangerous foes. The peasant liberation has torn asunder the old ties, and it is only the priests with the Polish sympathies and their great influence over the people, who have soothed and kept down smouldering dissatisfaction.

The great mass of the people do not realize what an enemy they have in the Polish upper class, nor the mental pressure and lack of responsibility under which the Lithuanian mind suffers on that account. Things Polish have gradually gained and are still gaining upon things Lithuanian, especially in the small towns of the country; it is impossible in such places to lead what may be called an intelligent Lithuanian life, everything which is not Jewish becomes Polonised. The language of the church in the district of Vilna in the parts where the Lithuanian and the White Russian nation join reveals a strange confusion; Polish parishes are scattered amongst the Lithuanian; in districts where the Polish language has really no footing and where it is not backed up by intellectual aristocracy of much account, infatuated Polish priests insist upon continuing to preach in Polish; they have an idea that they are carrying on Polish propaganda, but as a matter of fact they are only playing into the hands of Russia, for when the peasants see their own language despised and neglected, and have no other possibility of keeping mentally alive, the schools and things military, besides Russian police and State influence gain the upper hand over them; the outcome of all this are the poor semi-Russians, the first step along the dreary road in a change of nationality. According to Lithuanian papers, parishes, close upon those just referred to, but where the priest is a Lithuanian, are much less likely to be influenced by this Russian infection than are the former.

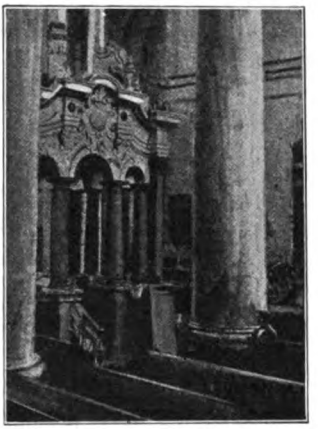
The Poles have literally done nothing to raise the country spiritually, they would not employ the Lithuanian tongue, and by adhering to the Polish they only obtained the opposite result by excluding all culture from the

peasants. Any material progress if one really any longer can speak of such progress is far more due to the Russians, through the great liberation of the peasants which to such a marked extent benefited the peasantry of Lithuania. It is significant of the trend of Polish thought at that time that the societies of Polish nobles were amongst the first and the most eager in demanding the abolition of serfdom, but they were only willing to liberate the peasants without any land; theoretically they granted freedom to the peasants, but the Poles would not give up the real power and the land. Matters were however settled in a different manner, and this caused the first ill-feeling between the two nations.

Group of Jews.

The most serious impediment however to all economic progress amongst the Lithuanians is to be found in the Jewish population of the country, the Jews constitute between one-fifth and one-sixth of the entire population. The Russians keep the Lithuanian peasants in political suppression and without any say in matters, the Poles have done the same to the people in spiritual things, and the third road to power, the road to material independence is being badly blocked by the Jews. The Jews have been in Lithuania from the earliest time of which we have any reliable record, but they have neither been willing nor able to assimilate with the natives of the country. Their great numbers, their prejudices, their religious fanatism, and their ancient exceptional legislation have tended to consolidate their position as an altogether alien element in the country. The many centuries have rather estranged them from the native race than united them with the latter, they do not speak the language of the country among themselves, but use their own Hebrew-German dialect, they do not dress like the rest of the people; although they have been forbidden to use their old peculiar dress, they manage by their dress to look different from other people. They have neither friends nor enemies nor interests in common with the people. The policy of the Jews has in the main been opportunistic, and it has been so of necessity; they have never been willing to make real friends for fear thereby of making enemies. They have

carefully scented from which quarter they for the time being might expect to meet with the greatest protection, and they have never dared to rely on living in security; they have probably not taken the interest in living there that they would have done had they felt they were living in a country of their own. Lithuania has been the place where the Jews have had the simplest and most sincere belief in the Messiah. Nowhere have they been more prepared to receive the Redeemer than in this out of the way corner, where the surroundings have allowed them to preserve all the memories, their traditions and customs in all their mystic dimness. To this very day the Lithuanian Jew says with the same confidence as centuries ago: "He comes assuredly and He comes soon".


Synagogue in Vilna.

One should view the Lithuanian Jew in the light of this firm belief, or in any case the hereditary propensities which bottom in this belief, in order to attempt to understand him, for only then can one forgive his whole mode of life; something great can even be discerned in this people, who otherwise involuntarily impress one unfavourably.

The Lithuanian Jews feel themselves as strangers, half homeless amongst a people who shun them, their whole existence is one continuous endeavour to keep a position of balance in the easiest way, to find the necessary bread, striving in their own shifty way to attain as much power as possible, and it does not concern the Jewish conception much whether this power be for good or evil to the country in which they live. The Jews have scanty or no cause to feel any kind of gratitude towards it. Humble and wretched as the Jew often appears to be, the pride of race still dwells within him. What does he care for the roughness and contempt of the infidels, he only gives way when he is obliged to, his mental pride does not suffer under it. Under all his humiliation and giving way, his soul is upright and erect as a palm tree, his faith and his hatred keep it so; he can see no shame in cheating and deceiving the hostile multitude amongst whom he lives, it is one of his chances of existence; when all straight paths are barred to him, he takes the crooked ones, for he means to get on, the undying tenacity and vitality of the Jew are his brief of nobility. Dirty, mean, and greedy from a superficial point

A Jewish „Thora"-writer.

of view, the Jew still possesses the gold of the soul which can glitter at the proper time, and if one approaches him without any stupid prejudice one can see what is good in him, then the best human qualities, sympathy and helpfulness become apparent.

This twosided state of affairs is the cause of that false position under which the Jews sigh in Lithuania, and there are many amongst them who have lost sight of the goal, being engrossed by the means of how to attain it. Sad to say there are many undesirable individuals amongst them; they have become a very serious nuisance, a nuisance of which it will be very difficult to get rid, because the people are really under their sway, they simply cannot do without the Jews. To suddenly remove the Jewish population would cause utter confusion and trouble in the whole life of the people.

When visiting the small Jewish towns which are to be found by the score all over the Lithuanian peasant country one is struck by the ugly and comfortless mode of living of this people. There is not a trace of any desire for beauty, no idea of even the most modest cleanliness or order. Hideous grimy booths with small dark rooms be-

A Jewish village.

hind; should there be a garden belonging to the house it is dull and neglected, pigs and fowls root and rummage in the earth and make it highly unpleasant to the nasal organs. The streets are dirty and muddy or the dust is flying about — here and there a board has been placed across the worst of the pools, everything looks as if it were only a temporary makeshift.

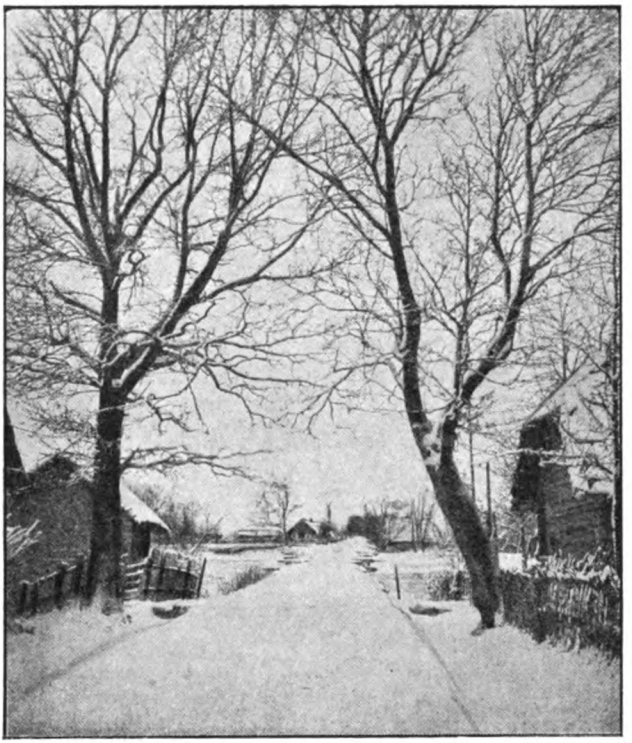
The peculiarity of their garments has disappeared, the government having forbidden the Jews to use any outward signs of their race. The men are not allowed to wear their "peysi" curls at the ear, and the married women

A Fair.

must not shave their heads and wear the huge wigs, brown and red, which are still to be seen in Galicia.

The Jews have then resorted to a kind of garment which faintly reminds one of the long caftan of the Oriental, but it is only a poor shabby half-European imitation. One at once recognises the Jew by his dress in spite of its not greatly differing from the ordinary European.

Bareheaded and with a woollen shawl over the shoulders, the women trudge through the streets, and an endless number of children fill the doorways and the steps of the shops. In spite of all this ugliness which offends the eye, there is all the same over the scene a busy kind of hurry, a striking contrast to what one sees in the quiet Lithuanian villages around. There is always, in any case apparently, a certain feverish activity over these Jews,



A Lithuania village.

although they very likely have nothing whatever to do; they are probably only gossiping or quarreling or eagerly discussing something, but they are always restless; it is interesting and rather amusing to visit such a little buzzing human nest. The Lithuanian peasant in his coarse grey wadmal cuts a peculiar figure amongst these "countrymen" of his.

There are two things which the Jews control in this country: trade and the selling of spirits, the public houses. The Lithuanian farmer is obliged to sell his produce to the Jewish buyers, and he must also buy nearly all his requirements from the Jews.

The freed landowing peasants to begin with were simply obliged to employ the Jews on account of their long standing experience in trading. They themselves possessed neither the ability nor knowledge to make a stand against the Jewish traders, and political conditions which on the face of it was a barrier to almost any mental development, made them an easy and rich prey for the Jews. They had to put up with the prices the Jewish corn merchant felt inclined to give, as they had with the goods and the prices of the Jewish traders.

This impenetrable net work of legitimate and illegitimate business with the Jews in which the latter know only too well how to entangle their customers until they are entirely in their power, extends over many a Lithuanian district.

One of the ways in which the Jews most bitterly have offended the feelings of the Lithuanians is in connection with the forests. The old heathenish idea that the forest is sacred prevails in Lithuania to this very day; this old veneration is deeply rooted in their minds, they love the forest and guard every big and handsome oak. The Jews have nothing of this feeling, and they more than anyone else are to blame for the reckless deforestation of later times. As the financial managers of the estates of the Polish magnates, and having taken over the land of ruined squires and peasants the Jews have cut down the forests for miles, and exploited everything as quickly as possible; it is as if a feeling of their insecure position drove them on, and they have done much harm to the country.

As a rule however a sensible modus vivendi exists between the Jews and the Lithuanian peasants, a kind of understanding which of a necessity springs up between people who are compelled to have dealings together, but real friendship between the Jews and the peasants is rare, and any bond of relation still more so. In the peasant villages they teaze and jeer at the Jews, but all the same they are often quite willing to let their table in the daytime to a Jewish tailor or shoemaker, when the people of the house return from their work the Jew packs up his belongings has a friendly chat with the peasants in his broken Lithuanian and then returns to the nearest little town, for a Lithuanian does not like a Jew to sleep under his roof. During the hard struggles of late years the Jews have rendered the Lithuanians many a service by getting books and newspapers into the country, and by acting as mediators between the peasants and the police regime, but they have made the peasants pay for this, they have not done it from sympathy for the misfortunes of the Lithuanians.

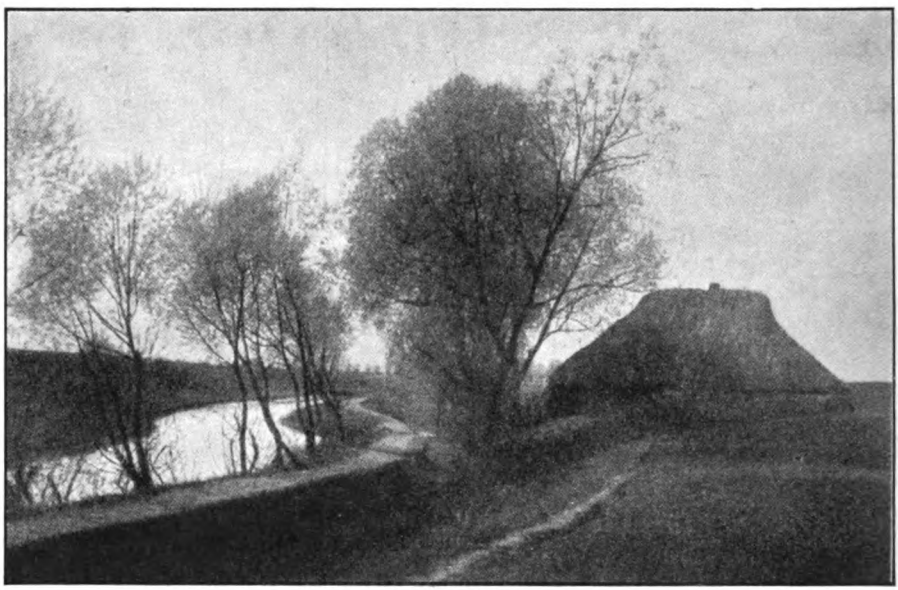
The Jewish hold on Lithuania is so powerful that business life has to be arranged according to the Jewish calendar.

Steamers run less frequently on the Jewish sabbath and their other holy days; on Saturdays the streets of the little towns with their unbroken row of closed shutters and doors look as they do on Sundays with us, nothing can be bought on the Jewish holy days and therefore the Christian population must keep count of them.

The other source of the power of the Jews however, the sale of spirits, has

been much more harmful to the people. From olden times nearly all the inns of the country have been in the hands of the Jews. It has been customary and is so still to some extent, to dispose of the privilege of selling corn-brandy in a district to the highest bidder, who again retails the privilege for a fixed annual sum.

In the Lithuanian inns drinking is mostly confined to cornbrandy. Owing to the business ability of the Jews and their aggregate financiel strength (a



„Their timbered houses and their gardens" . . .

number of them club together) the Jews own almost all the public house privileges.

On all the roads one finds these dirty little inns with a dingy greasy tap-room, where the pigs and the fowls often incommode the visitor. The bar is to be found in a corner and behind it stands the father of the family spectacled, calotte on head, and by his side his non too amiable looking daughter. To a stranger it is incomprehensible that the Lithuanians can be tempted to leave their timbered houses and their gardens, in order to sit drinking day and night in these disgusting holes. It is only too true that drunkenness prevails in Lithuania, the peasants cannot go many steps along

the road without being caught by the attractions of the Jewish inn. The temperance movement which was gaining ground before the years of misfortune set in ceased, the Russians crushing it by forbidding all temperance propaganda, all meetings, even appeals from the pulpit; the Government was afraid of any kind of gathering. Drink again began to hold its sway, strongly aided by the Jews who bartered cornbrandy away on the sly, giving the peasants long credit at the inns, as long as they came there frequently. The inns became the rendez-vous of the people of the parish both on Sundays and week days; rogues and smugglers congregated there, and many an "exploit" was arranged there, often with the help of the cunning and experienced landlord.

Where the inns of the roadside, easily accessible as they were to the police and under the control of the local reformers, did not flourish as much as the Jews wished, secret drinking places were provided, and it is a question whether there are most public or secret drinking dens in Lithuania.

This habit of drinking varies greatly in different parts of the country, there are places where old time sobriety still prevails, others where young and healthful efforts to keep down drink and waste of time make some progress, but there are also places where the men vie with each other in drunkenness and where the women too do not dislike the bottle, places where the peasants are not ashamed of riding straight from church, from confession and absolution to the nearest public house, and getting so drunk that they roll off the saddle on their way home. Many Lithuanians get into debt and poverty through spending their time at the inn and by means of cornbrandy the Jews lure the hardly earned money from the peasants.

The Russian Government has not been blind to the evils arising from this Jew difficulty in the western part of the realm; at different times attempts have been made to solve it, or at any rate do away with some of its worst effects. The voluminous Russian Jew legislation shows in its fumbling change from one system to the exact opposite how vain the whole campaign has been for solving this difficult problem.

At one time the Government have attempted to assimilate the Jews with the rest of the population in the country as during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, when a whole series of laws prohibited the Jews from showing any peculiarities in their dress and demeanour, at they same time as the were offered exceedingly favourable terms for becoming possessed of land; they were offered land free, freedom from taxes and conscription and loans to aid them during the first few years, but all this munificense was in vain, hardly any

Jews availed themselves of this chance; of 315,000 Jews in Samogitia only 2,600 belong to the agricultural classes. Later on the Government entirely changed their policy and went so far in the year 1892 that the Jews were forbidden to live outside the towns and tradingplaces; all the same 25,000 Jews live in the agricultural districts according to official statistics, in reality the number is the double of that or even more.

In order to remove the Jewish population from the frontier where they aided the smuggling going on there, by buying the goods from the smugglers, and finding room for storing them, a number of laws have been made. In the year 1839 til Jews were forbidden to settle within a distance of a hundred versts from the frontier, in 1843 a brutal decree was issued to drive away at the shortest possible notice all Jews living within fifty versts of the frontier only giving those Jews who owned houses and land two years to realize their property, but as the official report states "there were not so few difficulties in carrying out the imperial ukas in practice", and after endless annoyances the whole thing ended in nothing; new laws have made no difference, and to this day as formerly, only then there were not so many of them, the Russian frontier towns are crowded with Jews. In Samogitia alone 27,884 Jews according to the census of 1890 lived within the notorious fifty verst from the frontier and all who were driven out since the first decree coming into operation, do not amount to 200.

A Jew as farm labourer.

Legislation for putting down the corn brandy inns has not fared much better. There are plenty of laws, a perfect plethora, and as early as 1804 a law was made which by rights ought to have done away with all Jewish inn keeping in the rural districts, inasmuch as it simply prohibited it, notwithstanding this, Russian legislators have since then been busy supplementing and explaining this law in the most rigorous manner; at times decrees are suddenly issued which completely clash with previous ones, but the outcome of all this is, that there are if anything more inns in the country than when this legislation was inaugurated; by far the greatest number of the 25,000 Jews who live in the rural districts of Samogitia are either directly or indirectly connected with the trade in the corn brandy.

It cannot be denied that the legislative power inspires one with more respect than does the executive, when one considers this side of Russian official work. Here as in other Russian conditions the saying holds good: a busy pen, hard words, a meagre purse, and a slack hand. By means of a truly subtle understanding with the local authorities the Jews manage to circumvent many a rock against which the less wary Lithuanians come to grief. Cunning allied with great patience and a rare gift of bribing according to the standing and morals of the persons concerned make life possible for the Jews, although it is often bitter enough. That the Lithuanians in the end have to pay in order that the Jews have a fairly quiet time only enhances the tragi-comical aspect of the whole business.

The little corner of the earth where the Lithuanians dwell covers an area of about 80,000 square kilometres, of these 3,000 sq kilm belong to the kingdom of Prussia, the rest being under Russian rule. The Lithuanian language is spoken in four Russian Governments and in a small part of a fifth: In the whole of the Government of Kovno, the old Samogitia, in the northern portion of the Government of Vilna, in some parishes in the Government of Grodno, in isolated districts along the southern borders of Courland, and also beyond the Niemen in the northern corner of the kingdom of Poland, the Government of Suvalki, of which two-thirds are Lithuanian. Here the people have their mainstay, and they live under somewhat better conditions than further east. The kingdom of Poland still enjoys certain rights in some few directions, isolated remnants from happier times. In the kingdom of Poland "Code Napoléon" which was instituted in the Grand Duchy of Warszawa still holds good; the Roman Catholic church is better situated and amongst the officials, more especially amongst the teachers there are not so few of the sons of the soil, and not as east of the Niemen, exclusively Russians; some little instruction is even permitted in the "local language!" as the mother tongue is called, in contrast to the language of the fatherland, Russian.

This little corner of the world, worse luck, is not owned by the Lithuanian nation; even after the liberation of the serfs, and parcelling out of the soil, after confiscations and Russian colonisations, there are still such vast areas owned by the Poles, that one can realize how matters must have been in bygone days. As late as 1890, 46 percent of all land was in large estates and about 40 percent belonged to the Polish nobility. Now however the Lithuanians own the greater part of their paternal soil; especially in Suvalki there are prosperous peasant farms of 150—300 acres, a good few Lithu-

anians own farms of 45—60 acres, but the usual size of a Lithuanian freehold farm is about 20 acres.

At the distribution of land, after the liberation of the serfs, the allotments however were smaller. Amongst the peasants, on the estates of the landed proprietors in Samogitia, and who numbered 178,000 male adults and boys, were distributed $1^1/_2$ millions of acres which with some deductions figured out at about $7^1/_2$ acre per individual, the Imperial peasants received 9 acres each. In Denmark it would be considered a decent small holding, especially as the annual tax on each acre barely averages $^1/_6$, but in Lithuania it was quite another matter.

Considerable portions of Lithuania consist of boggy country, still larger portions are covered with forests and thickets, most of it however is good, partly cultivated soil, the forests abound in heavy timber, and the pastures are fertile. If a superficial view is taken of official Russian statistics, Lithuania must strike one as a blessed country, a happy and cheerful place, with increasing prosperity.

The population has increased considerably during the last fifty years, especially the Jewish, in Samogitia their numbers have been quadrupled during that period. This is not due to prolificness alone, although it is pronounced amongst the Jews under generally wretched conditions, but much of this increase is due to the Jews having been driven away from other districts, and to Jews who had emigrated to America and again returned not being able to earn a livelihood there, they crowd together with their brethren in towns already overcrowded. How they make a living is incomprehensible to outsiders, the old Jewish population of the town could probably explain.

The Lithuanians themselves as far as one can judge, for in statistics they are clubbed together with all the other Roman Catholics, have during the last fifty years increased from 700,000 to 1,100,000 as far as Samogitia is concerned.

This is a material increase, and is naturally in the first instance due to the liberation of the peasantry, and secondly to the general progress which the last five or six decades have witnessed in every direction, and which has made it possible for a larger number of people to live within a smaller area than formerly: railways, steamers, and machines. There is more money in Lithuania now, more business and manufactories, but the conditions of life for the common people have improved very little in proportion, and in some directions, matters have even deteriorated. So much is certain the unmoneyed class is increasing, and the great majority of small farmers have

great trouble in making ends meet; the last few years especially have been hard, and the growth of the population in consequence has fallen off.

It is not difficult to understand the economic trouble which has befallen Lithuania. The Lithuanian peasants have not understood in the least how to assert themselves in commercial intercourse; their products, timber, corn, meat and butter have been forced so low in price that their revenue from the soil has been utterly reduced, the unpractical and extravagant way in which the Lithuanian farmer cultivates his land no longer answers, wages have fallen to a very low figure, and the price of land keeps decreasing. Many of the small farmers have been compelled to seek assistance from the Jews and have, by degrees, incurred troublesome debts.

The main cause of all this is evident, it is ignorance and general mental stagnation.

The progress which was bound to come and which did come, has been succeeded by a state of sad retrogression. There is a want of knowledge to an appalling extent, there are no special schools no agricultural instruction, trade is entirely in the hand of strangers, and the Lithuanian peasant does not know how to raise the level of his work. He does not understand the system of modern turn-over and division of labour, and suffers perhaps as much under it as he gains by it. The home industry is spoiled and in many places entirely destroyed, without the time it occupied being employed to other purposes. They are taught that money is the only thing of any value, everything should be sold in order to be more independent in the choice of one's requirements, they must sell their wool and buy cheap cotton materials, etc., an excellent method from the tradesman's point of view, but the reverse for the peasant, unpractical as he is. How can this be otherwise in a country where the mother tongue and the intellectual life have been in chains for centuries and where the last thirty years have been nothing but a brutal fight against the soul of the people, in a country where all drawing together was considered a crime, because the rulers saw political ghosts behind every word that was spoken, and behind every act in which the police did not take the principal part.

If it were only material misfortune under which the Lithuanians suffer — such misfortune could be remedied when conditions mended, but what is worse is the spiritual harm which these years of persecution have wrought and threaten to do so more and more. It is not really an irreparable misfortune that the people do not acquire great knowledge nor as a rule no knowledge at all; neither are the evil attempts to destroy Lithuanian natio-

nality the greatest misfortune, that can be remedied and need not stain the human character. No, the great misfortune lies in that vulgarising process which is contaminating the people through clashing with the modern civilisation of the great world. The same fate threatens to befall Lithuania as would overtake a South Sea island should an invasion of Europeans destroy the peaceful happy community of the natives.

The whole growth of culture in Lithuania is apt to get ugly and one sided because the people lack knowledge for acquiring anything but the merely superficial, and what they sacrifice of their own is of much greater value than what they gain.

The lack of knowledge was not felt in days goneby, but now when life moves at a different rate, when all unorganized labour, all stagnation are barely tolerated, knowledge has become an imperative necessity and the lack of it is bound to tell its own tale.

By rail and by steamer the surrounding world invades the life of the Lithuanian people, they see and hear everything, but are utterly unable to understand and choose aright; the people can only see their own "peculiarities and absurdities", old habits and customs disappear, but coarseness and drunkenness do not decrease.

They forget their most beautiful folk songs and in their place sing silly and obscene ditties. They forget the good old custom: į talka eiti, to work voluntarily for one's neighbour, but instead know very well how to put up the price for their labour when their neighbour is most in need of it.

It is the same as can be seen in German Lithuania only more harmful, because in Russian Lithuania there is no German kultur "to guard and to absorb", and far sadder, because one can see no chance of any improvement; it is not only one or two generations which deteriorate, there is no apparent move towards a change of nationality but only a further downward levelling and demoralisation. Even if one presumes that the Lithuanians would gladly give up their language, faith and nationality in exchange for development in the more general human sense of the word, even their most willing endeavour to assimilate with the Russian nation would be practically impossible, for how could these two millions of people in their own country and with their own past, be received into the Russian nation and acquire Russsian citizenship?

The Russian invasion in Lithuania is entirely different from the German. In German Lithuania the entire intellectual life, the whole upper class are German, whilst the Russians in their Lithuania mostly consist of a flock of

officials, police and soldiers, small commanding bands in the midst of a strange land, much too few in number and too deficient in mind to absorb these two millions of people. The wretched peasant schools with their two or three winters of teaching in reading and writing cannot transform the

Fishermen of memel.

nationality of the people, not even the four years of military service in the depths of some Russian Governments can turn young Lithuanian peasants into Russians, although they are by no means nationally awakened; they return home and after a year or half a year in their village they have forgotten their Russian.

Perhaps a real change of nationality could be imagined if the Polish upper class for a long series of years were replaced by Russian; should such a thing be brought about quickly the people would have to be driven away from their native soil and in small clusters be distributed over the Russian realm, but such measures are not likely to be adopted.

Such a senseless idea as being willing to exchange one's own nationality for the Russian, is besides unknown in Lithuania, nor is the temptation to make the exchange overwhelming.

All the Russians so far have done, and all they can do in the future is to impede the national development of the people, confuse their ideas, and make them mentally unsound and unhappy, but assuredly this is not what the Russian central power intends with its blind fight for the "State" without any regard for the people who live in it.

The good within the people has suffered but it must be admitted that on the whole the people have been strong enough not to relinquish their own; they have taken shelter under the home roof and behind the church walls and in a way the violent persecution has had a sound and refreshing effect. It has called forth the instinct of self-preservation in many a mind, which under a milder and "more humane" rule would have assuredly become dulled, and not felt the misfortune and the degradation.

When the enemy almost daily wounds the religious feelings of the peasantry, and at fair intervals imprisons and scourges the people, and even violates the women and commits murders, then even the dullest will in the end understand that it is an enemy who is in their country and then those who are more awakened can gain the ear of the people.

But all this people of peasants from their own impulse have been able to do in order to preserve their faith and language, can naturally not amount to much, barely enough to keep what they possessed, let alone anything beyond this.

Within the timbered walls the father teaches his son to spell his way through the Lithuanian books until the son can fairly well master them, but the daughters less frequently learn to read.

The cost and the risk attaching to the acquirement of books have made them real treasures. It is only the few who possess more than the most necessary church books. If one compares the Lithuanian consumption of books with what a people of more than two millions nowadays require, the picture is indeed a dark one, and yet one must admire the energy exhibited and the sacrifices made in order to obtain books. Young people in Lithuania say that if the Government knew how much money is sent out of the country for the buying of books they would for this reason alone allow the printing houses to be reopened.

Russian officials must admit that the sale of their printed matter proceeds very slowly, in Samogitia over a million of people only buy books for

£ 60—£ 65 a year, that is the minimum with which the teachers let them off.

I have tried to describe what the Lithuanian peasant has borne and suffered for his faith and his church, the fight has been easier because the priests have stood by the people, which unfortunately they have not always done in the fight against the Lithuanian language.

The half unconscious fight however of an unenlightened peasantry against an all powerful enemy could not be of much avail, and this grinding stagnation assumed a still more desperate aspect if the idea presented itself that the country's own language and the country's own children had some day to work their way to the front along this road.

At last however the thing happened which was bound to happen should the national cause of Lithuania gain strength in the fight. A band of believers amongst the cultured and intelligent young Lithuanians have come forward, and the army of peasants has found its leaders. It is only twelve years since the first signal for their assembling was sounded, and in the year 1883 the first paper, Auszrá (The Dawn) was published in Ragaine in German Lithuania and it is really only from that day that one can speak of "The awakening of Lithuania".

This was in the quiet life of the people an event of far greater importance that the people themselves imagined at the time, of far greater importance than can be gauged from the effect such an effort at once produces, for such effect is often slight. The Lithuanian people who since the days of heathenism never possessed a real upper class are now about to create one. The Lithuanian language which hitherto had been confined to the cottage, has now to fight its way upward so as also to become the language of the more well-to-do classes; true it is a long and weary road, a road of which one cannot see the end on account of the many hills, but the journey has begun and onward they will move as fate ordains.

When national feeling fired the minds of the peoples of Europe barely a spark fell upon Lithuania, the movement simply passed the country by, neither is the awakening of Lithuania due to the after effects of those great days, the present day is not much given to be nationally stirred by romance.

Nor did the movement spring from old historic memories, nor from the time before Christianity and Polish influences, those memories were too moss grown to call forth the movement. The origin of the whole movement assuredly had its foundation in nothing but love of the people and deep compassion for the hard conditions under which they had to live. From this

The bishop is expected.

sprung a belief that the only road forward was the fight for the supremacy of the people and the language of their own country.

Russian Lithuania has not reared a single really great man whose powerful voice could aid the turning of the tide. Only amongst the Lithuanian priests there has now and then appeared a man so closely attached to his parishioners that he almost became a Lithuanian from national feeling.

At the head of the college which supplies Samogitia with her priests, there was for a number of years the present Bishop of Kovno, Baranovski, whose deep love for and subtle understanding of the Lithuanian language was involuntarily bound to influence the young, and more than one of his pupils have possessed both the inclination and a firm will to be the child of that nation to which his birth has destined him.

Amongst the numerous priests who spiritually only feel themselves as Poles lives a little flock which belongs to the people, who suffer, feel and work for it, and this flock happily is constantly increasing. Whilst some priests in purely Lithuanian districts still have to read their sermons and can only with difficulty converse in very mixed Lithuanian, there are on the other hand not a few who can guide and aid the people's craving for independence.

The position of these younger priests however, there are very few older ones amongst them, is very difficult inasmuch as they are

The bishop has arrived.

not only watched by the Russian police, but also by their jealous and hostile colleagues with Polish sympathies. Nor have they dared to do very much, but in secret and in their official work they aid the national cause.

It is however the attachment of the young students to the peasantry which has determined the issue. The great majority of the pupils of the Lithuanian colleges are the children of the Polish or rather Polonised lower nobility, they are Polish and remain so at least for the time being, but amongst these youths there have already for years been sons of Lithuanian farmers, well to do people anxious to give their sons a better chance, and greater enlightenment than could be obtained in the small secret Lithuanian schools or the Russian village schools. The colleges four in number are entirely Russian, Russian is the only language used there, Polish is altogether tabooed, but at the two colleges in Suvalki the students have the chance of a couple of hours weekly instruction in Lithuanian in addition to the regular programme. Some excellent and patriotic men through the medium of these hours in Lithuanian have known how to voice the claims of the home language and the home. Some of these young men, quite a few to begin with, with sound and practical notions realised how empty and worthless it was for the Lithuanians blindly to follow in the wake of the Poles, and not to care about the cause of their own suppressed people and to bind their fate to that of the Polish people.

They saw the contempt which the Poles had for everything Lithuanian, they understood the historic crime Poland had committed against Lithuania, and a rupture took place.

In order to draw the students from Lithuania to Russian universities, they were forbidden to study in Poland, and from confiscated Polish estates substantial scholarships were formed at the universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The main portion of the students had always gone to the university of Warszawa and in consequence the sons of the Lithuanian peasants had been further Polonised; but now these first "independent" all at once had to go to Russia. As early as the middle of the seventies a small band of students had clubbed together in Moscow determined to be Lithuanians in the midst of all their Polish comrades, warring against everything Polish. The most prominent of these students was Jonas Basanavičius the highly gifted son of a peasant, whose incredible gift for study and craving for learning made him take up a number of different subjects.

His parents of course had wished their clever son to become a priest, and he also began the preparation by becoming a servitor in his native parish

church. This was before the days of the revolt, the Polish language was still almost completely predominant and the boy obtained his first knowledge of Lithuanian from a perambulating teacher, daraktarius, doctor, a man of the people who went by the week to the farms for board and lodging and a small pittance. Jonas however did not wish to become a priest, and luckily for him the Russians became masters of the country. The college of Suvalki which had formerly been entirely Polish, one of its rules being that none but sons of the nobility could be admitted to it, was now accessible for everyone even for the sons of the peasants and the Lithuanian language became a subject. Jonas went to the college, became a student and continued to be a Lithuanian; he attended lectures in Moscow on history and languages, wrote when quite young critical essays on the past history and the language of the Lithuanians, fearlessly tackled the most difficult and obscure problems of these subjects whilst at the same time he changed his mind and began to study medicine. He became a doctor but as he thought it would be hopeless to seek for a post in his own country he accepted the proposal of some Bulgarian friends and immediately after the war of liberation of Bulgaria in the year 1879 Basanavičius proceeded to that country.

Dr. Basanavičius.

A distinct scientific theory of his, that Bulgaria was really the first home of the Lithuanians and that the old Thracian people were one with the Lithuanians also tempted him to visit Bulgaria. Here his patriotism received a strong impetus; he could see how wonderfully and quickly this young nation revived after centuries of Turkish suppression. He grieved and felt ashamed of his own wingless people, so poor and helpless, and he determined to raise a band of fighters to defend and elevate his country.

Together with two young Lithuanians he formed the editorial staff of a Lithuanian paper and in the year 1883 the Auszrá (The Dawn) appeared.

The gauntlet was boldly thrown down, first and foremost to the Poles, as those who had swallowed up all the Lithuanians possessed of culture, in the same way as they formerly had cowed the Lithuanian language. "Ye young Lithuanians who learn something and know something, ye shall and ye must cling to your language and your fatherland, that is the only way to free our beloved countrymen from darkness and suppression.

What was our people during the Polish era: Nothing.

What can our language and our national cause expect from a new Poland: Nothing.

Let us use the same misfortune and suppression from the Russians to free our language from the Polish sway, it is easier now, for the honour and advantage of becoming Polish is not so tempting as in days goneby. The condition of our peasantry has been changed, it is now free and for the most part the land is freehold; our language has no rights, but the Polish language also has but few. Russian our culture can never become, the road to Polish has become heavier, from a purely human point of view, there is only one way out, that it becomes Lithuanian, which is also the most natural solution! Let us rouse ourselves and work, work for the spiritual liberation of our illtreated people and our language, then the rest must and will follow!"

In words like these came the appeal from the "Auszrá".

Only a comparatively small number of people read the paper, but it came like a bomb upon the limited circle it meant to address — A *Lithuanian* monthly, an appeal to create *Lithuanian* intelligence, to face old friends, to denounce Poland. They raged, and mocked and ridiculed, from the Polish side came the words: "Litvoman", "rennegade", "attack on our flanks", but in the dawning often unconscious opposition the "Auszrá" came as that helpful light for which they had been longing. One of the most fervent in the Lithuanian camp of to day has related how the "Anszrè" impressed him: "I received the first number of "Auszra" and looked at it with a smile and shook my head; Lithuanian, surely this was akin to foolishness! — I do not quite remember what happened to me whilst reading the paper, but I remember that one day I got up from my chair and lowered my head without daring to raise my eyes to the walls of my chamber. — It was as if I heard the voice of Lithuania half accusing half forgiving: "Oh apostate, where hast thou been so long?"

The fateful step had been taken. From distant corners of Lithuania men came forward to join the flag. Basanavičius however was no great genius as an editor, the most important thing about the "Auszrá" was, that it was the first cry uttered aloud, its contents did not always come up to its good and heartfelt intention. The first step in movements of this kind is rarely or never distinguished by firmness and weight, there is always something undecided, too much of a lyrical tendency about it, and the "Auszrá" was no exception, but there was enough manly will and earnestness about it to have the desired effect. This paper barely lived three years, during which time it

appeared in modest numbers, from its ashes have since risen quite a little series of Lithuanian papers.

It is lucky for the fight of these young people that Prussia owns part of Lithuania, where European modes of thinking and activity prevail, thereby it is possible to prepare and carry out on Lithuanian soil much work which would be impossible inside the Russian Cossack realm, in German Lithuania the papers are edited and printed, and here the persons concerned can without hindrance meet and discuss matters. All the prominent names, all the responsible editors are Prussian Lithuanians, their Russian brethren work behind this shelter,

The whole movement has sprung up like a plant from the Lithuanian mother soil, a plant which only needs a little rain and sunshine to bloom. It will not die now, it belongs to the thoughts which are admitted to be indispensible to life. It won at once followers and is winning more and more.

The fight will be carried on without cessation, without conciliation until the day of victory, however many defeats and however small the progress.

It is a gigantic fight which will have to be fought, but the goal is plain enough: the Polish intellectual supremacy must be thrown off, the Jewish financial mastery must be broken, and the Russian suppression tempered. The methods must be: the enlightenment of the people and the formation of a Lithuanian upper class which can lead in the fight.

The difficulties are so great that even the boldest might lose courage. Even the simple fact of letting the peasantry know that they no longer stand alone in the fight has taken years, and has not yet been completed. The masses of the people for every year that has passed become more and more reserved and suspicious and more especially they have learnt to be on their guard against all culture, not to have faith in any one — all the fair words were probably only meant to lead them to destruction.

All kinds of propaganda on a large scale for the new ideas are impossible under the existing rule of the police, even the work of enlightenment has been hindered in so many ways that it can only proceed very slowly.

It is quite out of the question to obtain permission for the holding of meetings, for the giving of lectures, immaterial of what the subject may be, and any active teaching of the young is not to be thought of.

The very limited means which are available make it impossible to distribute printed matter on a large scale, and the risk it entails for the liberty and happiness of all concerned, makes it necessary to exercise the greatest caution.

The monthly publications which are now issued have had a severe struggle for existence, almost all work is gratuitous but it has been hard work to remunerate the editor and pay the expenses of printing. They had to a great extent to depend upon voluntary gifts from the little band of poor students who at once offered themselves for the fight.

Three small monthly periodicals for Roman Catholic Lithuania are now published in Tilsit: the Varpas (The Bell) principally intended for the young Lithuanian intellectuals, the Apžvalga (The Outlook) the organ of the Lithuanian priests, and the Ukinikas (The Peasant) for the rural population.

These Lithuanian papers are proscribed, wherever the police come upon them they are confiscated and the owner is often severely punished, even the most good natured frontier officials dare not let them through. The getting them across the frontier so increases the cost that the price in Russia is some 12/—14/ pr. annum whilst in Germany it is only 3/—4/. They have to be forwarded as closed letters or through well paid smugglers who pluckily get them past the Russian customhouse sentries during the night.

In Lithuania several persons join in taking a paper which is then passed from hand to hand always at the risk of being collared by the police.

If it were against the Russians alone that the Lithuanian movement had to contend the fight would not be so painful and precarious, but the Poles too have risen against it with all that embitterment which results from groundless mortification. With increasing uneasiness and fear the Poles cannot help seeing that the Lithuanians are spiritually awakening, that a state of opposition has sprung up between the Poles and Lithuanians in the matter of intelligence, whilst formerly it was only a question of the Poles being on the high level and the Lithuanians on the low. The Poles collide with Lithuanian peasants of self conscious bearing, they see one man after the other from the cultured classes developing "peasant" sympathies and they consider it a shameful, and horrible treason against the holy cause of Poland, that unreal "Poland" from the Baltic to the Black Sea . . . with a brilliant and verbose nobility and a grey and silent peasantry. This aptly illustrates the trend of development among the Poles under their misfortunes.

They have in Lithuania become the bitterest foes of this onward movement for as they have a foot in almost every house affected by the movement, they espy and persecute, and have even demeaned themselves by joining the Russians in trying to crush it. They denounce the leaders of the movement and egg on the Russians against them, at the same time keeping quiet to their countrymen in Warszawa and Krakow about the trouble. They

go so far in their claim of the country that the murderous assault in Kražaü was described in the Polish papers and after that in many European journals under the heading "Polish blood shed for Church and Fatherland". The Lithuanians either become Poles or — nothing if they prefer the latter.

Judas is not wanting in the picture, there is more than one Judas, miserable souls who for favour and gifts betray their countrymen. The worst of it is that however cautiously the young Lithuanians carry on their work they are never safe from treachery, the Russian authorities have offered a reward of five roubles for any information given to the gendarmes about prohibited literature and anyone laying information about a meeting of but five or six people, or who can communicate anything about conversations "dangerous to the State" receives an extra reward. Many have availed themselves of this disgraceful means of earning money and the Lithuanian papers constantly contain reports of such cases, the information to boot often being false. Quite young children betake themselves to the gendarmes in order to tell them of the hiding places of prohibited literature which they may have discovered in a hayloft or between some beams. How could it possibly be otherwise in the darkness which hovers over the country, and where it is easy to find and to bribe traitors. It is not likely that a feeling of unity so quickly and effectively could lay hold of the minds in a country which has been so inhumanly illtreated and where such an endless confusion of ideas prevail.

Poland as imagined by Poles (from a Swedish book).

Everything so to speak may entail danger. Where evil-minded persons discover "Litvomani" punishment is prompt. A considerable number of men have

already had to sacrifice their position for a moment's incautiousness and not a few have been sent out of the country, especially amongst the priests who have sympathised with the people. Thus the two teachers in Lithuanian at the colleges of Suvalki were discharged and exposed to bitter privation poor as they were. In another place the local magistrate was dismissed from his office because only Lithuanian, the peasant tongue, had been spoken and sung at his daughter's wedding.

"Peasants may do this sort of thing, but for people of your standing it is suspicious", was the reply when he complained of the injustice. The aggregate of imprisonments endured for the national cause would amount to many years.

The people of the houses where the sympathies are Lithuanian in spite of culture and conditions of life have to be most careful not to display these sympathies. Many a man with a warm heart and who would gladly enter the list on behalf of the language of the peasants and help them to get over their ignorance and coarseness is simply powerless, all he can do is quietly to influence those nearest to him, he is compelled to take stringent measures when he would rather be lenient and must in silence be a witness of injustice and infamousness if he is not prepared to sacrifice his position and what influence he has.

I have spoken with more than one of the Lithuanians who are the standard bearers of this movement, and they were all of good courage, for in spite of every obstacle, of all malice and treachery, they declared that the movemen twas progressing so steadily and distinctly that they felt they had firm ground under their feet. Some few were even so sanguine that they already saw the dawn of liberty in the horizon.

One must excuse this optimism considering their youth and inexperience, they forget that the length of the road before them has not been gauged, what a sea of turbulent confusion has to be crossed before they reach the first resting-place. They look upon every tiny little result, a converted Polish sympathiser, a dozen fresh subscribers to a Lithuanian paper, some encouraging words from a kindly man of science, with beaming eyes. All this youthful intelligence I think I may say without exception forms the front line; these men have either come from unenlightened peasant homes or they have turned their backs upon old Polish homes.

A peculiar feature in this connection and one which in the years to come may prove of great importance to the Lithuanian cause is to be found in the

contrast which has existed for centuries between the nobility of Poland proper and the nobility of Lithuania. It can be traced through the whole history of Poland and bottoms unquestionably in old national differences; it is the Polonised Lithuanians and the white Russians who after all have had a certain feeling of belonging to another nation. Now that the power of Poland has been crushed and democracy is in the ascendant many have a more open ear for the cause of the people. Converts are constantly made from amongst them, and people who have lived the whole of their childhood and youth in a Polish atmosphere indoors, now jump through the window into the Lithuanian forest, they teach themselves the "peasant language" and join the ranks. Yet the Lithuanian peasant sons are and always have been the core of the movement. The well-to-do farmers more and more endeavour to send their sons to college, indeed it is not necessary for the parents to be particularly well off, for as soon as the young man has become a student he can manage for himself by teaching and with the help of Lithuanian scholarship. At the various Russian universities there are now small committees for the welfare of the homepeople. Also in the home country young men of humble extraction but with ability and their heart in the right place are won over to the cause. The movement has already several small centres from which the work proceeds; students, young doctors, priests and lawyers write in the papers and translate useful pamphlets, and there is already a modest band of authors, and from the centres in the country the distribution of Lithuanian books takes place. Money is collected in many different ways, for money is always scarce, and it is necessary to go from house to house, find out the sympathies of the people and their means, and endeavour to obtain a contribution from them. This house to house campaign is not devoid of danger if extended beyond one little village. By means of the passport which everybody has to carry about with him, the police can control where the person in question has been, where he intends to go, how long he will be on the road, and what his business is, and should the perambulating youth arouse the suspicion of the gendarmerie he must abandon his work. The young movement endeavours as far as possible to further Lithuanian reading, in this work they find the best support in the priest with Lithuanian sympathies who risks much in helping the peasantry.

In the vacations when the students return home they try to give secret lectures or keep small summer classes for their nearest relatives, but more especially they endeavour to win over the most respectable of the peasants, arouse them through daily intercourse and conversation, which means fresh adherents to the cause.

All over Lithuania there are now secret societies whose only "criminal" aim is to spread abroad Lithuanian books and papers. Everyone who joins binds himself to sobriety and to read a Lithuanian monthly. The society takes in a certain number of papers according to the number of its members, it distributes free of charge papers of information and undertakes the purchase of books for its members. Of course there is no list of the members nor any fixed time of meeting, everything is arranged by word of mouth. Very seldom, but it has happened, they have ventured to hold more important meetings on Russian soil, but it is extremely risky and it is absolutely necessary to know how honourable and long headed the peasants are with whom they are brought in contact. The speeches are never inflammatory, their only purpose being to enlighten and draw the people together, and one cannot but admire the moderation which these young people display.

Altogether but little so far has been accomplished, a small fragment of a road of many miles, but in any case it is a beginning. There is now in full vigour a modest Lithuanian intelligence, there exists a Lithuanian national feeling which has already extended beyond the cultured classes. The circulation of books has vastly increased, so more and more people must be able to read. In the little towns the first Lithuanian shops have been started alongside of the numerous Jewish booths, true there are but very few so far, but it is always a beginning, they are called Roman Catholic shops.

The position of Lithuanian papers is more assured now than formerly, and one, the church paper, is quite prosperous with more than two thousand subscribers; the agricultural or peasant paper now appears every fourteen days, and every time presents a little pamphlet to its readers. Lithuanian literature is still in its first infancy, yet it is not true what a large Polish paper stated, that it only mounted to some prayerbooks, a couple of grammars, and a few small papers; a hundred years ago one had more than that. Up to 1892 the Lithuanian bibliograph Baltromaitis had accounted for more than 1,100 books in Lithuanian and about the Lithuanian language and people from ancient times.

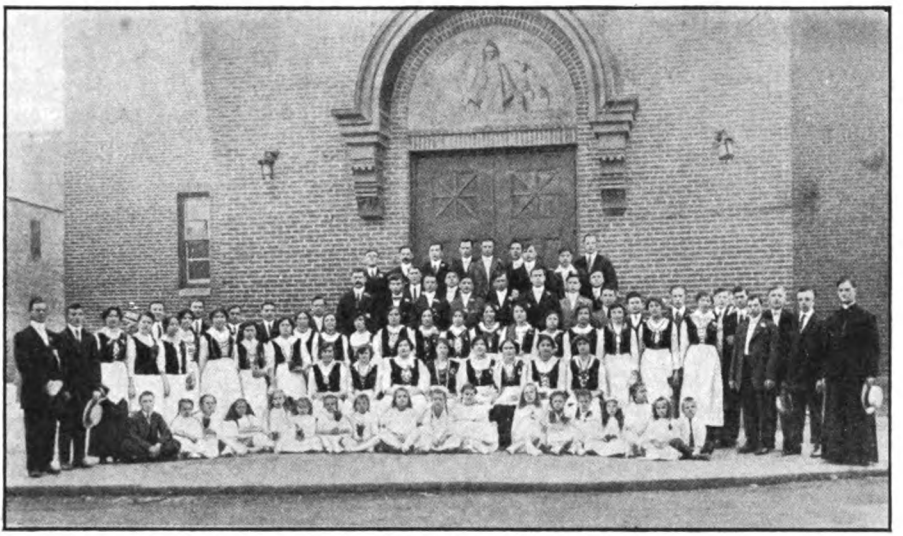
VARPAS especially strives to express itself in pure and good Lithuanian a series of translations from Polish, Russian and English amongst the latter Byron have been published in this paper, also some reditable descriptions of the life of the people in novel form. The works of Daukantas have been published as well as several books of poetry by young Lithuanians, even Lithuanian women have made their debut as authoresses. Of course this new literature is marked by a lack of independence and originality it is and can only be a pioneer from a linguistic and social point of view.

As far a sits own country is concerned the young Lithuanian literature has to break entirely new ground with exception of the Dainos, but there can hardly be a ny doubt as to its having a future. The people of Lithuania are thoroughly poetically gifted, and the literature of Poland whose great names partly belong to Lithuanian families, give us the right to expect great things.

The Lithuanian movement, aye the whole Lithuanian people have received an unexpected and significant help from the Lithuanians who have emigrated to America. The gloomy conditions in the home country have during the last decades driven a large number of Lithuanians across the Atlantic to the United States. The one flock has drawn the next and all told there are now more than 200.000 Lithuanians in America principally in Pennsylvania. Only a few of them are farmers, their lack of knowledge, their poverty and helpnessnes have forced them into the ranks of labour and most of them are employed in factories.

Dr. J. Šliupas, the champion of Lithuania in America.

But amongst these Lithuanians a number of gifted men have cropped up, several young intelligent Lithuanians have fled to America owing to conflict with the Russian law and in a short time a remarkable movement has sprung up there. A complete Lithuanian community has been formed, a number of Lithuanian parishes with priests preaching in Lithuanian have established themselves in town and country. A Lithuanian literary society has been formed, and the largest and richest Lithuanian paper is published beyond the seas; it is called "Vienybé" Unity) and is a liberal Roman Catholic paper (appearing every week with eight large pages.

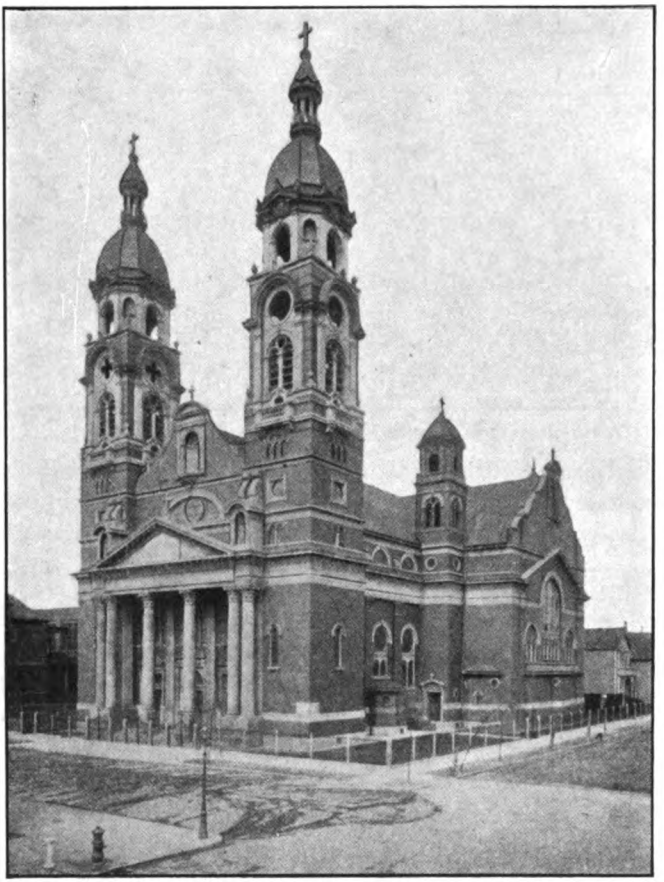


A Lithuanian choir of a parish in U. S. A.

All the numerous Lithuanian societies in America are imbued with true patriotism. They strive to keep au courant with events in the mother country and to help her practically, also with good advice, and a tidy sum is sent

The school.

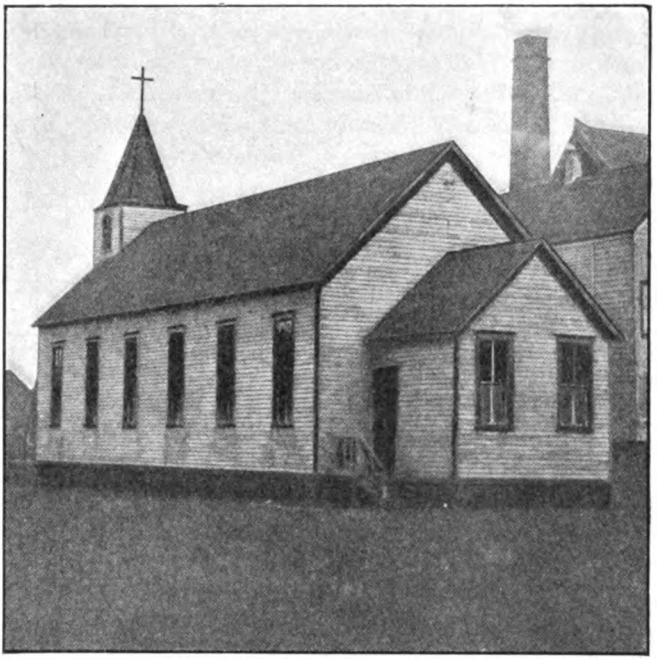
every year to the old country. It is only in America that the Lithuanians fully realise the unhappy position of their fatherland. They view with wonder a country with wide political and personal liberty where the one nationality does not attempt to cow with violence another nationality, they find out that it is quite possible to live without the Jews and the Polish masters.



The church of the Holy Cross in Chicago (built by Lithuanians in 1915).

When the news of the bloodshed at Kražiai reached the Lithuanians in America, a cry of indignation went up; they held meetings in many places in order to voice their anger and bitter feelings, and protests were forwarded to the Russian Ambassador in Washington and to the Tsar himself, but of much greater value was the further outcome: the great combine of all Lithuanian parishes and societies. In the spring of 1894 a great congress was held of delegates from all the small Lithuanian communities and a proposal was here brought forward which may prove to be of much importance to Lithuania in the future. It was proposed to collect money for the purpose of opening a Lithuanian school on a large scale, send for young cultured Lithu-

anians as teachers who were to work out a complete plan and translate or write Lithuanian school books. This great school was to be the home for the study of Lithuanian science and the Lithuanian language, it was to raise intellectuals speaking and writing Lithuanian, who would be able to aid the people in the fight for their rights. — So far it is only a scheme but it is quite possible that it will be realized. During the last few years a peculiar form of emigration has been adopted, which will make itself felt in Lithuania. Thirty to forty young men cross the ocean under the guidance of a safe man. In America they take employment for a couple of years, live extremely frugally and quietly in the old home fashion, and eventually return with their well earned savings. They become the best supporters of the Lithuanian movement, they have been braced up by this trip to a foreign land and have become possessed of a more fervent patriotic spirit. The Russian Government looks askance at all this emigration traffic and have often forcibly hindered it by declining to supply passports. Not a few of these young men on their journey to and from America, have been obliged to smuggle themselves across the Russian frontier, either by cunning or bribery.



One of the many Lithuanian churches in U. S. A.

Lithuania will assuredly become one of those European countries which will owe a debt of gratitude to America for the development of its intellectual life.

THE young students are in many respects placed in a very difficult position, all associations of mind and will bind them to their rural origin, their whole inclination is to give their life to the fight for the humble people at home, but the gulf which results from the vast difference in insight and knowledge, in culture and sympathies between parents and son, between brothers and sisters is bound to show its effect. Formerly the Polonised peasant student was the superior element on the home farm, the light which condescended to shed its rays on the humble surroundings, but now he wishes to remain one of them and it is nearly impossible to do so. He spends his time between books and people, of whom his own people have no conception, he carries on his studies in a foreign language in a foreign land, and what he sees and hears is entirely different from what his home people see and hear. I shall never forget the impression it made upon me when I saw my Lithuanian friend's sister for the first time. With him I conversed as with my equal in knowledge and understanding, nothing in him seemed to betray the peasant student — and his sister! to begin with I could not at all realise that it was his sister as she stood before me looking as if she had stepped straight out of an old dainá: bare legged, with her skirt turned up, a coarse linen shirt, a peasant kerchief bound round the head, and with that serious half anxious look in the eyes which the Lithuanian peasant girls often have. She was just going out milking, pail in hand — "she can neither read nor write, but she can go to church".

Dr. Kudirka, the founder of "Varpas".

THERE lies one of the misfortunes and a future danger. The Lithuanian intellectuals, as far as the greatest part of them are concerned, have broken with the church and its teaching, they are indifferent as regards religion. They have come under the influence of the young Russians with their radicalism, their civil and religious disavowal, and far-reaching liberal views, too often however dim and aimless.

There is a smouldering ill will against the Roman Catholic priesthood,

who in the opinion of many of the young men impede the fight against the Poles, and the spread of knowledge, and because they further a morbid religiousness.

Nine tenths or more of the Lithuanian priests still have pronounced Polish sympathies, and with their powerful influence especially over the women, they are the main hindrance to a strong Lithuanian movement, and by their numbers they intimidate the few priests with Lithuanian sympathies. Any attack on the priesthood by these young men is at once looked upon as an attack on the holy Roman church, and even the paper of the Lithuanian priests looks with suspicion at this upshoot of worldly intelligence.

The young movement dare not adopt such active tactics in this connection as many would like, and they are no doubt right in leaving the Roman Catholic clergy as such alone, only trying to infuse into them a Lithuanian spirit and the Lithuanian language, and in carrying on the propaganda amongst the students and the clerical seminaries, and this they have also done; there are encouraging signs amongst the younger priests that they are more and more becoming the friends of the people.

There is a somewhat extraordinary problem which disturbs the young Lithuanian students — whom are they to marry?

There are hardly any or rather there are not any cultured purely Lithuanian women. Some Lithuanians especially before the movement came up have married Russian women, but in this connection there is an unfortunate circumstance, namely that the children of such marriages are bound to be Russian by religion, and this means a good deal in Russia; they are lost for the Lithuanian cause. Others, probably the majority, have married Polish women, but this will not do at all now in the opinion of the young students, the Polish women are dangerous, they cannot become good mothers for the Lithuanian children, and yet there are fervent friends of the people amongst the Lithuanian women of Polish birth.

The "Varpas" gives its readers the following advice: Dear friends, choose betimes a pleasing and sensible village maiden, if you can afford it let her frequent a Russian girl's school, if you cannot, teach her yourself as much as your time allows, educate her, and in the fulness of time marry her, and proceed with her education — and you will see what mothers and Lithuanian children you will get!!

This is very sensible advice, but it is rather too much to ask that they are to choose their wives when they are only lads and stick to their choice. Those who do not choose to follow this somewhat weary road to the wedding feast, is recommended by the "Varpas" to marry a Lettish girl,

a daughter of the kindred neighbouring people, whose lot is much happier; the paper thinks she would have a good influence on the Lithuanian women.

Thus far the movement has already advanced — it is making arrangements for the next generation!

If the people in Russia understood Lithuanian and if at the proper quarters this national fight against Poland was duly heeded, there would be every occasion for rejoicing. The end which Russian statesmen strove for years ago by means of their rule of violence in Lithuania, is now about to be brought to its consummation: the Lithuanians are about to free themselves from the Poles, although rather in spite of the Russian efforts, for the Russian endeavours to sever the two people from each other, have as a rule had the exactly opposite result.

A peasant woman.

If the Lithuanians had but had that scanty freedom in spiritual matters which the Polish people have been granted the rupture would have taken place not only earlier but also in a sounder kind of way, and Russia would not have made such a bitter foe for herself of the young Lithuanians as she is now likely to.

People have often and with good cause admired and lauded the superior, determined Russian foreign policy, the endless, unceasing expansion, the absorption of thousands upon thousands of square miles, people have watched with wonder those frontiers which keep advancing without anyone really knowing how and when. The farseeingness of the Russian statesmen has often commanded universal respect, but the policy of which the centenary can now be celebrated, the policy which Russia has adopted towards Poland cannot in any way be praised, can in no respect be considered wise. They have neither understood to solve nor to cut through the Polish problem, all they have done during the last few decades is to bury it as deep as possible. Russia's aim cannot be to uproot and eradicate the Polish nation, 12 millions of human beings with an ancient history, with a tradition of

power, and a grand literature cannot be wiped out by decrees and the police, nor has it ever been the endeavour of thinking Russia. The solution of the Polish question does not lie in the land of the Polish people, but in Lithuania and Little-Russia. All concessions to the Polish nation within their own domain would be in vain, for every concession granted to Poland would only have increased the danger for Lithuania and the old West Russian countries. All Polish insurrections have had their main cause in demands upon non-Polish countries, which demands both from a national and partly also from an historic point of view were devoid of all right. The bloody Polish insurrections have dropped poison into the huge political body of the Russian state, and incited to the shameless and brutal coercion of the suppressed people. Russian policy in Lithuania and Little Russia has made a sad, not to say a mean mistake. The Russian authorities saw clearly enough that these countries ought to be wrested from Poland, but instead of employing the tool for this purpose which was close at hand viz the non-Polish and even principally Russian population of the countries, Muscovite officials, decrees and gendarmes were resorted to. The cowed elements in the population ought to have been developed, and to have had all the rights and all the enlightenment on their own soil that were possible, so that they in national self-assertion, would have constituted a strong wall against all things Polish, but in their shortsightedness the Russians, during the first fifty years or more, allowed matters to remain as they were, and then with brutal violence they upset everything.

The Poles might have learnt long ago that all their demands upon Lithuania were altogether vain had Russia understood the task set her there, instead of which the Russian gendarme rule for many years fraternised with the Polish oppressors of the people. The population of Lithuania should have felt Russian rule as a liberation from degradation, but by degrees it has become the reverse. The Russian rule in West Russia has made nothing but mistakes, a true understanding with Poland is as far off as ever, and Russia continues in her short-sighted policy. The modest movement which has now raised its head amongst the young cultured people in Lithuania, is again being combatted with Polish aid, wherever that is possible. If the Russians were wise they would encourage this movement, it would prove a good ally for them against the erratic Poles, and as far as one can see without any danger to the "Empire", for the Lithuanians do not think of anything beyond the right of inner development and spiritual freedom, and any further demands at present are altogether out of the question. The young Lithuanian intellectuals it should be remembered stand far freer as regards the traditions

of the past than do the Poles. The Lithuanian upper class have no historical idols to worship, no tradition of former power, nor the burden of centuries of national hatred. They are at liberty to allow themselves to be influenced from all sides, and the young Russians with whom they study probably influence them more than any. It is only through the medium of peoples possessed of enlightenment and self-esteem in the old Polish domains that the Poles can be brought to their senses and a lasting understanding between Russia and Poland become feasible.

Even the Jew problem would then be solved, the Jews would become the friends of the people — or leave the country.

A Russian statesman *must* come who can see this, a thing so evident to all unbiassed minds.

It almost looked as if something good was going to happen at the recent change of ruler in Russia.

A ray of sunlight fell upon the Russian realm when young Tsar Nicholas so unexpectedly early ascended to power. All those hoping for a change, all those to whom every day under the gendarm rule of Eastern Europe is renewed suffering, all believed in a new and happier time, such a young man could not possibly be so hard and unaffected by all these sighs for freedom.

The beginning was promising enough. Both in Finland and Poland a change of system could be noticed, and a fresh breeze even reached Lithuania. The condemned men from the affair in the church at Kražiai were almost all pardoned, and there was a rumour that the Governor General of Vilna and the Governor of Kovno were to be dismissed. But what was even better than all this and what caused much joy amongst the young Lithuanians, the censor in Vilna allowed several Lithuanian books printed in Lithuanian letters to pass, certainly not matters of any great importance but it was a distinct change from former times when everything Lithuanian was prohibited. The very fact of being allowed to sell and distribute useful books amongst the peasants meant a great deal. A number of the most enlightened and well-to-do Lithuanian peasants resolved to present an address to the young Tsar in which they prayed him to allow them to have a Lithuanian printing house again. Amongst the great host of deputations from different parts of the realm that soon after the accession of the young Tsar went to render their homage, were a small number of Lithuanian peasants carrying the petition with them.

It was on that occasion Tsar Nicholas delivered his well known speech in which he nervously warned the people against all rash expectations and assured them that things would remain as before.

In their fright the Lithuanian delegates did not even manage to present their petition, nor would it probably have been of any avail had they done so.

The armistice as far as Lithuania was concerned barely lasted the time of an "Ave Maria".

To-day things are as they were before. No books are allowed to reach the people through the censor, and several which had already been forwarded to Vilna with his permission were suddenly sent back across the frontier. Persecutions, dismissals, and deportations take place as before. The Russian Government after this new and strange change has lost no time in healing the wound which the decision of the Tsar in the Kražiei catastrophe had dealt to the representatives of the Russian rule in Lithuania, for both the chief instigators of this infamous deed which is now apparent to all, received high orders, Klingenberg the chief executioner had already received an Imperial autograph letter commending him for his deed. The peasants of Samogitia may now expect anything in the way of revenge, for nothing can now prevent these gentlemen who have been rewarded by the Tsar himself, from acting as it pleases them towards their subordinates. One fine day perhaps in the course of half a year, perhaps in the course of a whole year or more, the arm of the law strikes where it is meant to strike, gendarmes break into a house, arrest and bind the intended victims and the latter disappear to be heard of no more. The day the verdict was pronounced in Vilna, secret orders were sent to the gendarmerie in the country to spy and make a note of anyone giving vent to his disapproval.

"We have only ourselves to depend upon" the "Varpas" wrote the other day. — The young Lithuanians must realise this, they must endeavour to get some system in their warfare, first and foremost it is a question of accurately ascertaining what and how great the forces the Lithuanian people possess.

Cost what it may of personal sacrifice, of danger and efforts, the entire area inhabited by people speaking the Lithuanian tongue must be minutely examined, the boundary of the Lithuanian nationality must be drawn, and a record must be made of the circumstances and the intellectual conditions of each district in the country; before this has been done, no proper fight can be fought nor can due aid be given to the weak. Amongst the Lithuanians in America work is now proceeding with the view of acquiring the soil of the fatherland for their countrymen.

As the Polish squires by degrees become impoverished and are willing to sell their estates, the Lithuanian peasants to whom the law gives the right intend to form big combines in order to buy up and parcel out the land.

This no doubt is the best method available for the moment: to again become possessed of their own land.

The Lithuania of the future must have its mainstay in the soil. It has no towns and no prospect of winning over any town for the Lithuanian language.

An entirely new town would have to be founded, such a thing has been dreamt of in connection with the Lithuanian high school and the Lithuanian Academy which is a matter for the future. There are amongst the young Lithuanians men with great though for the moment fantastic ideas of a future Lithuania, where there is no intellectual class division, no proletariate, no plutocracy, where science and the arts shall be supported by the real surplus of labour and the products of the soil handled and exploited in common by the owners. These pictures of the future are after all not altogether castles in the air, for the Lithuanians to such an overwhelming degree own the soil, and nearly all are peasants, that is men who are producers.

The intellectual standpoint is pretty much the same throughout the country, no native upper class with traditions, no plutocracy amongst the people ready to seize the power at the expense of the masses. The frail and youthful culture which has just taken leave of the peasant home, and which it now wiews with a strange unfamiliar feeling, would easily find its way back again, and become a support in the best sense of the word, as soon as the illtreated people have secured the right of development and ennoblement. — But this will mean a long and hard fight, because the world is still so short sighted and hard fisted.

The seal of prince Vytautas.